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WHAT NEVER HAPPENED

A Novel of the Revolution

By "ROPSHIN"
[*Boris Savinkov*]
Translated from the Russian
By THOMAS SELTZER

ALFRED · A · KNOPF
NEW YORK · MCMXVII

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NOTE

When I first opened my office in the summer of 1915, and before I had actually issued a single book, I determined to publish an English translation of "Ropshin's" great novel of the Revolution, *What Never Happened.* But the time did not seem entirely opportune and so temporarily I put aside the project and for two years brought out in the Borzoi Russian Translation series works by Andreyev, Gorky, Sologub, Tolstoi and others which have been received with uncommon favour by the American reading public.

What Never Happened has, however, never been out of my mind for long—every now and again some enthusiast or other would call on me and suggest that I let him translate it for me. But arrangements were virtually made in June, 1915, with Mr. Thomas Seltzer, who first called the book to my attention before either of us had any knowledge as to the real identity of the author.

We all knew that "Ropshin" was a pen name, and that his book, which created a great stir in Russia and even among the Russians in America, was so true to the facts of the terrorist existence that many of his fellow workers had condemned him for his frankness. Also that he had paid a fleeting visit to New York. More definite information about "Ropshin" no one seemed to have.

Then in March of this year came the Revolution and

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among those whose return to the fatherland it hastened was Boris Savinkov, a Russian who had been fighting with the French army in the West. This Savinkov was a terrorist of long standing who, implicated in the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergius and Von Plehve, had been condemned to death at Sevastopol in 1906 but had escaped to Switzerland and thence to France. He now hurried to Petrograd and was promptly sent to the front as head of the Commissary Department in General Kornilov's army. In August the great retreat commenced and he was called to the capital by Kerensky and appointed Minister of War.

Boris Savinkov is "Ropshin" and *What Never Happened* is thus the work of one of the most prominent men in Russia today. One need scarcely point out how thin the partition is which separates this literary production from the actual life lived by its distinguished author.

ALFRED A. KNOPF

Sans Souci,
28 October, 1917

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WHAT NEVER HAPPENED

PART I

CHAPTER I

FROM the moment he crossed the frontier Andrey Bolotov became a prey to the vague apprehension felt by a zealous property owner who leaves some one else in charge of his estates. The vast revolutionary Party extending throughout Russia was to him a huge estate, the administration of which involved untold labour. It demanded some one with untiring vigilance to watch over its dynamite workshops, secret printing presses, fighting squads, district and government committees, peasant brotherhoods, workmen's circles, student groups, officers' and soldiers' organizations, and its plots, arrests, strikes, demonstrations, successes and failures. He did not understand that his comrades, old man Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg, Vera Andreyevna, Arkady Rosenstern, and the others—that they had the same attitude as he, each one regarding the Party as a flourishing estate belonging not to Bolotov, but to himself. But even had Bolotov understood this, he could not have uprooted that feeling, which alone gave him courage to live and work as an outlaw, without family ties, without home or name, unterrified by the prospect of imprisonment or death. Only the lurk-

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ing conviction that he, Andrey Bolotov, was the most loyal, the most obedient, the most self-sacrificing member of the Party, which to him was the mother of the revolution—only the conviction that without him the Party would fall to pieces, upheld him in his purpose.

When Bolotov finished the business that had taken him abroad, and was about to return to Russia, his unrest mounted to a climax. He was quite sure that his comrades had not paused in their work of distributing prohibited literature, printing proclamations, arranging strikes and manufacturing bombs. He knew that those men and women who, impelled by the most varied motives, had united to create that live intricate mechanism, the Party, never paused in their humble but, to them, necessary labour, like the toiling of ants at their ant-hill. And yet he was beset by a dread, which bordered on a torturing certainty, that this time on returning home he should find only the pitiful ruins of what he had left; he should find the ant-hill demolished by a ruthless foe.

That oppressive period when he had been a prey to fear for his own safety had passed long before. Just as a mariner becomes accustomed to the sea and no longer gives any thought to the possibility of drowning; just as a soldier becomes accustomed to war and no longer thinks of being killed; just as a physician comes to lose all fear of contagion; so had Bolotov become accustomed to his "underground" existence and had ceased to be haunted by the thought that some day he might hang. But somewhere in the depths of his soul, lulled though it had been to unconsciousness, there stirred a dark and restless feeling—that same feeling which never leaves the mariner, the physician, or the soldier. And under the control of this feeling Bolotov had unwittingly

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grown into the "conspirator's" habit of secrecy. It was not that he hid from his relatives and friends, but he could no longer understand why one would visit friends and relatives just for the pleasure of it. It was not that he was silent about Party matters, but he could not understand why one should talk about them to outsiders. Nor did he avoid strangers, but he merely could no longer understand how one can trust chance acquaintances. He did not see that all his relations with people, from his mother and father down to concierges and butlers, were guided by fear and by a keen desire to conceal those details of his life which were of paramount interest to him. And even had he seen this, he could not have acted in any other way. He would have told himself that lies and concealment were justified by the fact that the Party could be protected only by the strictest secrecy and that hence they were essential to the revolution.

The assassination of Plehve, Bloody Sunday, the dynamiting of February Fourth, as well as Liao-yang, Port Arthur and Mukden were still fresh in everybody's mind. Old and young, government officials and workmen, army men and students, adherents of the régime and Socialists—all alike felt that something new was in the air; something that never was, unfamiliar and therefore alarming. The old habitual order, sanctified by centuries, was rocking. But though everybody felt it, they all continued to lead their usual life with its trifling everyday interests. And so did Bolotov. He kept on reading revolutionary pamphlets and writing in the Party organs that "the people have awakened," that "the red flag is now proudly waving," and that "the time is near when the shackles of autocracy will be burst

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asunder." Not that he had grasped the significance of contemporary events, but through incessant repetition it had become second nature with him to speak and write in phrases of the kind. Being a man of keen perceptions, he had long known that the Party was steadily growing, and because of this he believed with a firm faith that the revolution must come and that it would come triumphant. He was confident that it was impossible for the Government to gain the upper hand because he believed the Russian peasants, hundreds of millions of them, would join in the uprising. So, in this belief, he occupied himself daily with the business of his Party, and was really useful, as long as thus occupied, to the revolution in which he had such firm faith.

Before leaving Berlin for Russia he shaved off his beard, selected an inconspicuous dark coat of English cut, and changed his tell-tale broad-brimmed hat for a derby. He made his preparations with the care and deliberation that were characteristic of him. He knew that to avoid irritating espionage he must identify himself with the crowd. In the train he did not buy his beloved Socialist daily, the *Vorwärts,* but some unfamiliar capitalist sheet, which he read hiding himself behind it, from force of habit. On the first page he noticed printed in large type: "The loss of the Russian squadron."

Bolotov had felt nothing but joy at Stoessel's surrender of Port Arthur and again when the news had come of the battle of Mukden. He looked upon every war as a crime, as senseless slaughter, something pernicious and atrocious. However, had anybody asked him what he thought of the Japanese war, he would have an-

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swered unhesitatingly that the Japanese "adventure," though cruel, was nevertheless useful. He could not have answered otherwise. He thought that the defeat of Russia would be the defeat of autocracy, and the victory of Japan would be the victory of the Party and, hence, his own victory. He could see no contradiction between these views, and neither could the audiences that he addressed at meetings.

But now, as he read the news dispatch, he felt no trace of that familiar, yet guilty, feeling of joy as at his own victory. His brother, Aleksandr Bolotov, was a naval lieutenant attached to Admiral Rozhestvensky's squadron.

"As soon as the smoke had cleared away," wrote the German correspondent, "the battle was renewed with redoubled vigour. All the Japanese ships had concentrated their fire on the battleship *Osliabya*, and the latter was soon enveloped in flames and forced to retire. The battleships *Suvorov* and *Aleksandr* were also set afire. Then the *Borodino* and others began to burn. The Japanese fleet was at its full strength, and the battle lasted until 2:20 P.M. At 2:50 P.M. the *Osliabya* went to the bottom."

Bolotov closed his eyes. He tried to picture a sinking battleship. Once, on the French coast, he had seen a sunken schooner with two forlorn masts standing out of the water. And now, trying to imagine the *Osliabya*, the picture of the unknown schooner rose before his eyes. He was sure that several hundred young and vigorous men had gone down with the battleship. As a Socialist and revolutionist, he should have been revolted by the thought of this criminal slaughter. He was not. He could not visualize the defeat of the fleet,

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or the burning battleships, or the sinking *Osliabya,* or even the simple and terrible death of a sailor. To him the newspaper report was nothing more than a meaningless collection of words. He read on:

"When the *Suvorov* and the *Aleksandr* retired from action, the battleship *Borodino* became the flagship. The *Suvorov,* though enveloped in flames, kept on fighting until it lost its foremast and both smokestacks. Admiral Rozhestvensky was wounded at the very outset of the engagement and removed from the battleship *Suvorov* to the destroyer *Buyny.* Admiral Nebogatov took over the command. At seven o'clock in the evening a large fire burst out on the *Borodino,* and it soon went to the bottom, all in flames and smoke."

Bolotov recalled his brother, a young officer, broad-shouldered, of medium height, in naval uniform. He seldom thought of his brother. He knew he was at the front, in the Far East, and that he had no sympathy with the revolution. That was enough for Bolotov. He had no time to think of matters that had no direct bearing upon his beloved Party. But now he felt sad.

"Perhaps he has been killed. Who? My brother? Sasha? Perhaps Sasha has been killed there, in the battle of Tsu Shima?"

And as it sometimes happens in dreams, he suddenly saw a vivid picture of the battle in all its details. He saw a huge black wounded battleship, the stacks rent by shots, the guns shattered, the masts in ruins. But the banner of Andrey was still floating in the air. And he could see Sasha pale, in a torn uniform, all covered with blood, where he lay on his back, on the wet bulging iron deck near the pilot-house. He even imagined he could see how the ship rocked to and fro and

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the waves kept beating against the partly submerged steering-wheel. He could almost hear the lashing of the waves.

Without any longer grasping the meaning of the words, Bolotov read on: "Admiral Nebogatov raised the signal of surrender, and the four Russian battleships *Nicholas I, Orel, Apraksin,* and *Seniavin* were thus, on May 16 at 10:30 A.M., surrendered to the Japanese forces."

"Sasha killed. Is Sasha really killed?" And once more he recalled his brother's face as he had looked when he saw him the last time in St. Petersburg on the Nevsky. It was a bright, cold autumn day. He remembered the quiet, light-blue eyes and ironical smile. "Good-bye, Andriusha, we are not bound in the same direction." He also remembered his own cruel reply. And now he wished he could bring back that sunny day, so that he might undo the evil of his biting words, embrace, and forget the antagonism which now seemed so futile.

The train came to a rumbling halt. Lanterns glimmered through the darkness. The grey uniforms of gendarmes appeared. Voices speaking in Russian came to Bolotov's ears. They seemed strange to him. It was the frontier. Aleksandrovo.

Bolotov threw away his newspaper. Trying not to think of Tsu Shima, or Nebogatov, or his brother, or the *Osliabya,* he made his way to the room where the luggage was being examined. Tall, lean, clean-shaven, with a cigar between his teeth, he looked like an Englishman; and, in fact, he had an English passport in his pocket made out in the name of Henry Macmuir. There was a tedious wait in the hot crowded hall, full of

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gendarmes, and his firm, good-natured face, with blue eyes so like his brother's, expressed nothing but fastidious boredom.

When he arrived at Warsaw next morning, he telegraphed to Berlin: *Alles bezahlt*, which meant: "Arrived safely."

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CHAPTER II

BOLOTOV reached St. Petersburg on the morning of the next day, and that evening he rang the bell of the fifth floor of a big house in the Ligovka section. While taking off his coat in the hall, he could hear a voice, dry, sharp, crackling, the voice of Arseny Ivanovich, and another voice answering excitedly.

"Oh, no, what is there so terrible about it?" Arseny Ivanovich was saying impressively. "I don't see anything terrible about it, my benefactor. The water is not working their mill, but ours. Two days ago it was Port Arthur, yesterday Mukden, today Tsu Shima. Who is ahead of the game? The Japanese? No, sir, not only the Japanese. I'm an old man and let me tell you this: towards autumn the army will be ours. Do you think we have none of our people in the army? We have, my benefactor. Our boys will find a way to get by anything. Sometimes they jump over, sometimes they shove through, sometimes they slide under and—crawl on their bellies, too." He finished with a hearty laugh.

Bolotov had known Arseny Ivanovich for many years. He was one of the founders of the Party, well on in years, but still vigorous in spite of his white hair. He was proud that his father had been a peasant and that he himself had been close to the soil in his youth. But now the only remaining signs of his peasant past

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were certain quaint turns of speech, the continual use of "benefactor" in his conversation, and a heavy spade-shaped beard; also his air of authority arising from the fact that he knew the peasant at first hand, not from books. "My word is pewter," he often said, and his word was respected and trusted.

"What do you mean? I am not talking about that," answered the young unfamiliar voice, hotly. "I agree with you on that point. But what I am asking is this: how can one serve in the army? How can a Socialist serve in the army? It's an anomaly. It is in direct opposition to our principles."

Standing there, in the dim hall among an untidy array of hats and coats, Bolotov again called up the picture of the inglorious battle to the minutest detail. He saw the huge black battleship with its four smokestacks; near the pilot-house, Sasha on his back in a pool of blood, and the waves lashing against the half submerged steering-wheel.

He could hear Arseny Ivanovich repeating elementary Party beliefs, the very things Bolotov might have said in his place. But now it seemed to him that somehow these stock phrases did not ring true, that they were futile.

"Sasha! Where is Sasha?"

Bolotov recalled the forgotten verses of Pushkin:

> "Then twice the angel blows his horn:
> The earth reverberates with thunder,
> And brother from his brother is torn,
> And son and mother hurled asunder."

"'And brother from his brother is torn.' So Sasha was torn away. And Arseny Ivanovich is laughing. But what ails me? Isn't Arseny Ivanovich right?

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Isn't it true that the army will soon be on our side? Isn't it true that Tsu Shima will open the eyes of the soldiers? What's the matter with me?"

He came to himself and pushed open the squeaking door.

Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg, and comrade David, a young man unknown to Bolotov, were enveloped in a thick cloud of tobacco smoke. Vera Andreyevna, a tall, middle-aged woman with a worn yellow face, was pacing the room rapidly, as though in a prison cell.

Twice a week these people gathered to discuss their daily Party work. It was this daily work that they regarded as their great task of managing the organization. Just as a mason does his humble but useful share in building a house by digging the foundation, unloading the brick, and passing the buckets of cement, so did they patiently and humbly, stone by stone, build up the Party. But the mason does not have it in his power to destroy the house, or to prevent its completion, this power being vested in his master. And so, neither were they the masters of the revolution, and their attempts to direct it were always and invariably futile.

After Bolotov had finished the report of his trip abroad, Doctor Berg dryly acquainted him with the most important purpose of the meeting. Comrade David, an army organizer, a Party member doing propaganda in the army only, had come to St. Petersburg to communicate to them the fact that an infantry regiment of the city of N—— was ready to revolt any minute. The members of the local committee, including David, had not cared to undertake anything without the sanction of their older comrades.

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They immediately began to discuss whether or not it would be advisable to start a revolt. They carried on their discussion convinced that the fate of two thousand soldiers hung upon their decision. They seemed to forget that when people determine on murder, revolt or the risk of their lives, they are not influenced by the fact that five persons whom they do not even know consider the step good, useful, or necessary, but by a multitude of unforeseen and fortuitous circumstances. And, still more important, the group who were discussing the matter were oblivious of the fact that no man has control over another's life and that people in a moment of mortal danger are guided neither by prohibitions, nor by orders, nor even by a sense of duty, but by hidden motives, which are intelligible to them alone. And it seemed quite natural and proper to grey-headed Arseny Ivanovich, to Doctor Berg, to worn-out Vera Andreyevna, and to Bolotov himself that comrade David, who was in close touch with no more than a dozen soldiers, should have come in the name of the whole regiment to ask them, the unknown persons, what would be the proper time for the whole regiment to begin killing and dying. And to David, too, this seemed natural and proper.

David was a sickly, weak Jew with a little blond beard. He was standing in the middle of the room gesticulating and stammering excitedly:

"Forty per cent. of the regiment's non-commissioned officers," he said, "are class-conscious. There is a revolutionary circle in each company. The whole training command is with us—well—the regiment is dissatisfied—a revolt is quite feasible, and the most important thing, you understand, the most important thing is

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that the soldiers are demanding it. Our propaganda has been carried on since the autumn. No arrests have been made. The colonel is a beast. When I left, the comrades, representatives of the companies, had been unanimously for it. And even if you don't give your permission, the soldiers will revolt anyway." He almost shouted the last words, not perceiving that they made the whole discussion pointless.

Doctor Berg, rubbing his thin white hands, looked up at him from under his glasses and said carelessly:

"Allow me to ask, comrade, how large a garrison have you in your city?"

"Garrison? What do you mean?" David seemed embarrassed. "When I tell you—"

"In Party matters preciseness is essential," Doctor Berg replied coldly. "Won't you tell us, please, how large a garrison you have in your city?"

"Well, all right. We have Cossacks and a battery. But what are Cossacks?"

"Will the battery join in the revolt?"

"How funny for you to ask me! How should I know?"

"And the Cossacks?"

"The Cossacks? No. Probably not."

"Probably or certainly?"

"Oh, my God! Well, all right. Then certainly."

"That's all. I thank you, comrade," said Doctor Berg, with a smile.

Closing his eyes, he threw himself back on the grease-stained couch, as if to show that he, a man of business, had already settled the question of the revolt and that the rest held no interest for him.

"But what have the Cossacks got to do with it?" ex-

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claimed David, now completely disconcerted, patches of red staining his cheeks. "I tell you, the regiment is sure to revolt."

At these words Vera Andreyevna ceased pacing the room and stopped directly in front of David.

"But if the regiment is sure to revolt," she said in an irritated tone, "why have you come to us? If the regiment does not submit itself to this committee, what is all this talk about? You kept on assuring us that the committee has been working. What does its work consist of? I can't see."

"That's not the point. Oh, my God!" David cried in a wail. "I am telling you. What am I to do? If the soldiers revolt—well?"

"Here's my opinion," Arseny Ivanovich began in a conciliatory tone. "Of course, if the boys want to revolt, it is difficult to restrain them, but not impossible. There are Cossacks and a battery in the town. If they don't join, the revolt will be unsuccessful again. And we must avoid unsuccessful uprisings. We must—" Arseny Ivanovich suddenly changed his tone and continued softly and soothingly. "We must have patience, my benefactor; we must restrain ourselves. The deeper you plough the merrier you dance. So, my benefactor, in the autumn things will be different, but now it's not advisable, my benefactor, not advisable."

"What do you mean—restrain ourselves? How can I restrain them? Show me how. Oh, my God, my God! It is certainly peculiar. How can I hold them back? If they say they're going to revolt? You say it's inadvisable. But what can I do? What can the committee do? We've been working. For what pur-

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pose? For a revolt. Well, now they want to revolt. So what can I do? Well? My God, my God!"

David began to pace the room in despair. Vera Andreyevna retreated into the corner by the window, and crossed her arms over her breast. She did not want to interfere in a matter that seemed hopeless to her. Doctor Berg, leaning against the back of the sofa, kept his eyes closed.

The discussion seemed futile to Bolotov, and it made him uneasy, too. He felt that David, on returning to his city, would inevitably go to the army and would inevitably perish. And it became clear to him that it was not a question of whether David should or should not die, for that was no longer in their power; but the essential thing was that David should die with the knowledge that his death was radiant and beautiful and the Party had given him its blessing. And yet not knowing why, Bolotov with unexpected tears in his kind eyes, rose abruptly from his chair and kissed David warmly.

"Go back, my dear boy. You are needed there more than here. God be with you."

David went away beaming.

Doctor Berg, in his businesslike way, continued discussing Party matters a long time—the proclamations had not arrived in time again; a strike was in progress in Korovin's factory; Student Nikandrov was under arrest; a letter had been received the day before from the peasant brotherhood; tomorrow they would have to prepare an editorial for the paper, *Twilight*.

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CHAPTER III

VANYA, a dark-haired youth of about twenty-two, with high cheekbones and narrow Mongolian eyes like slits, was waiting for Bolotov in the dirty saloon, The Wave, in the Viborg section. The place was smoky and hot. It smelled of beer. A second-hand phonograph was squeaking.

"Did you want to see me?"

Vanya rose slightly from his seat.

"Yes—I asked—but I really don't know—where I should begin. You see, I'm working here, in this factory."

"Are you a locksmith?"

"Yes, I'm a locksmith. I'm working here, in the factory, but I absolutely can't stand it any longer."

"What?"

"You'd better let me join the terrorists."

Bolotov had never taken part in terrorist "undertakings" and never had killed anybody. That was not because he saw in terror an act of murder, but because of pity for the victim. He had never asked himself whether it was permissible or necessary to kill. That question had once for all been decided by the Party, and often he wrote, and at meetings always emphasized, that "the comrades were forced to resort to bloody methods with the deepest sorrow." But he himself did not feel sorry. On the contrary, whenever there was a successful bomb explosion, he would be very happy—

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another enemy killed. He did not understand what a man feels when he goes to kill, and he was glad, in a simple-hearted way, that there were many people in the Party who were ready to die and to kill. And because there were many such people and because he looked upon the Party as his estate, he gradually became used to the fact that there are people in the Party who kill; and little by little he began to look upon terrorism as upon any other Party "work."

"God knows I am speaking to you as I place a candle before the Truthful One." Vanya was talking hurriedly, from time to time looking up at Bolotov bashfully with his black eyes. "I'm opening my heart to you as at confession. How can one do otherwise? One must approach such work with clean hands. It may be that I am as yet unworthy to die for the revolution. You can judge for yourself after I have told you all. You must know that before this I was mostly a hooligan. As my father was one of the Black Hundreds, what could I see at home? Nothing but cursing, drinking, fighting. Well, so I started to drink and became a hooligan. There's an ocean of wickedness in me. And I don't know how to cleanse myself. If you deny me the chance, what shall I do? Because I absolutely can't stand it any longer."

"You can't?" Bolotov smiled.

"I can't. I stopped drinking, you know, and left the Black Hundreds. I started to read different books, about land, for instance, or the works of Mikhailovsky—began to live quietly. Sometimes I would earn three rubles a day."

"Why did you stop drinking?"

"How shall I tell you? It was so ugly. What am I

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anyway? A good-for-nothing. Well, so I quit, of course. Don't doubt what I tell you. I don't touch the stuff any more. How can a man belonging to the Party drink? If he does, he had better drop out of the work and become a hooligan again. I figure it this way: if you stand for the people, for land and for freedom, then you must keep a close watch over yourself and always be ready to die. Well, so I kept on living like this, and I even got married. Time went on, you know. I was then working in Nizhny. A strike broke out in our factory. The Cossacks came. We debated this and that, turned this way and that way. We piled up stones, tore down a fence and made a barricade. Everything was ready. And the Cossacks, of course, began shooting. My wife happened to come along. Well, naturally, you know—the Cossacks killed her." He ended in a husky voice and became silent.

Bolotov knew by heart these open-hearted confessions of workers, as he knew the shy, sincere tales of students, youths, girls and old men—of all those numberless soldiers of terror who were dying for the revolution. But now as he listened to Vanya and looked into his trusting eyes, he felt uneasy. He thought: "He believes in me; he is certain that at any moment I am ready to do what he would do so simply and unhesitatingly—that I am ready to die, of course. And I? Why am I still living? Because," he immediately answered in his thoughts, "because I am essential to the whole revolution, to the whole Party, and also because there must be a division of labour." But this time he was unable to make himself believe these empty words, which his comrades, Doctor Berg, with special emphasis had repeated so often. In the depths of his heart he

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had wanted to agree with them. "Vanya might argue in the same way," his thoughts ran on, "Vanya, too, is convinced that the whole Party needs him. Why am I better than he? But he will not say so. His wife was killed, and he will also kill, if he has not already done so. And I?" With an effort he rid himself of these thoughts and turned to Vanya.

"Well, what happened next?" he asked, filling the glasses with beer.

"So they killed my wife. Well, after a little while I said to the factory workers: 'You know, boys, I've made up my mind to kill Gavrilov.' Gavrilov was our superintendent, a chained dog, not a man. The boys told me to quit it. 'What is Gavrilov anyway, Vanya?' they said. 'He isn't worth soiling your hands on.' 'No,' I said, 'even a bug is meat. Why should Gavrilov live?' But they talked me out of it. So, of course, I became very sad. My heart kept on aching and aching. I became restless, lost my appetite and sleep. I went on thinking and thinking—I'm opening my whole heart to you—and at last I came to this conclusion: that man is a man who can act for himself. I had a friend, Assistant Surgeon Yasha. So I went to him and said: 'Yasha, my dear friend, please let me have some poison.' 'What do you want poison for?' 'Why, to exterminate rats, of course.' 'Rats?' he said. 'So.' He smiled, but he said: 'All right.' 'Please let me have something strong,' I asked him, 'a sure thing and no mistake.' 'All right,' he said, 'don't worry.' He let me have some poison. I went home to my village. Cossacks were then stationed in our village because there had been an uprising of our peasants. My mother wasn't living. My father asked me: 'Where is Av-

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dotya?' meaning my wife. 'Avdotya?' I said, and I told him everything. My sisters-in-law made some cakes for Christmas. I said to my father: 'Invite a few Cossacks to the house, father. I want to treat them to some of our cakes.' Father was surprised. 'Have you gone crazy, or what?' 'You just ask them to come,' I said. He looked at me and didn't answer. The Cossacks came, four of them. They said their prayers and then seated themselves at table. They took some wine and then began eating the cakes. I told my father: 'You'd better not eat those cakes.' So he didn't. I looked on. What's going to happen? They each had a cake. Nothing happened. 'Did Yasha fool me?' thought I to myself. 'Impossible.' I really don't know how to go on." Vanya stopped abruptly and reddened.

"Why?"

"I committed a great sin."

"Don't mind. Tell me what happened."

"Well, all right." Vanya sighed. "I was sure some mistake had been made. So it was all a comedy. But then I saw one of the Cossacks sway and drop his head on the table as if he were drunk. 'Then it's the real thing,' I thought to myself. Next I saw another one get dopey and turn quiet. I kept on offering them cake and wine. 'Eat, my friends,' I said; 'we are glad to have you with us.' Well, all four of them died."

Bolotov looked at Vanya in astonishment. It was hard for him to believe that this labourer with the ordinary drab face of the Mongol and the trusting eyes had done such a terrible deed. It was still harder for him to believe that he alone, without anybody's help or advice, had conceived and carried into effect such a sly,

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treacherous plan. "Were all to revenge themselves like that, we should long ago have had no gallows, no Cossacks, and no whipping rods. Can I be so revengeful?" Bolotov asked himself, and immediately found his answer: "I can't take such revenge because it's villainous. It is neither revolutionary nor a terrorist act, and I am a revolutionist and a member of the Party." But even these thoughts could not reassure him.

"Well," Vanya went on, glancing sidewise at Bolotov. "Well, I ran away, of course. A search was made. A number of government officials came smelling about. But they couldn't find me."

Vanya was silent. The saloon was crowded. The phonograph kept up its incessant squeaking. The voices of drunken, cursing men filled the place. There was a clatter of dishes. Waiters were hurrying to and fro between the tables. Bolotov, with his head resting on his hands, was lost in thought. "What am I to say? What can I say? What right have I to talk to him? Bah! This is all nonsense. He's waiting for my decision, and I must give it to him. Everything else is nonsense and cowardice, and I must not think of it."

"So I may hope?" asked Vanya timidly. "I understand perfectly what it is that I did. But, please, be so kind, let me serve the Cause. I can't stand all these outrages." He brought his fist down on the table angrily.

Bolotov raised his head. He was going to tell Vanya that the comrades appreciated his devotion and resoluteness. But instead, in total oblivion of these prescribed words and of his duty towards the Party, he turned pale and, without looking at Vanya, said:

"I don't occupy myself with terrorism."

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"What?"

Bolotov repeated, raising his voice and speaking sharply:

"I am not the person to speak to. I don't do terrorist work."

Giving Vanya no time to come to himself, he rose and left the saloon. He felt it was, perhaps, the first time he had dared to speak the truth. The unfamiliar feeling was so strong that he halted. "Why did I tell him that?" He was uneasy. "*Am* I not a terrorist? Wasn't I in duty bound to listen to him? Am I not responsible for bloodshed? For the blood of those Cossacks whom Vanya killed? For Vanya's own blood that may be shed? Haven't I made matters worse? He could not understand me. Why have I confused him?"

He could find no answer to his questioning.

On his left flowed the deep waters of the Neva, silent and majestic. Beyond he could see the black outlines of the huge, unlighted Winter Palace. A light rain was falling.

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CHAPTER IV

SINCE the day when Bolotov read the news of the Tsu Shima battle, he had been weighed down by a vague unrest. There were times when he could not fall asleep until morning. He was not wearied by the harassing life of a conspirator any more than before; he had long ceased to understand or appreciate that secure, peaceful existence which he termed the "bourgeois" life. But what had been sacred and positive, what had been determined, and firmly determined, long ago, now seemed obscure and undetermined again. The wide familiar highway had suddenly brought him to a trackless wilderness.

Tonight again he could not sleep. It had been a busy day full of troubles. The student committee had been arrested, and Bolotov and Doctor Berg forced to seek out new friends and to make new connections. He returned home late at night and, without turning on a light, undressed and got into bed. He tried not to return to those thoughts which had haunted him during the last few days. "What nonsense!" he said to himself. "Isn't it true that the war is a government war and not the people's war? Of course it's true. Therefore, if the Japanese have won, whose defeat is it? Obviously the defeat of the Government. Exactly." The yellowish rays from a street lamp came in through the window and stretching upwards like cobweb threads faded into shadow on the ceiling. "The

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Government is our worst enemy," he murmured, as he tried to fall asleep. "Therefore, if the Japanese defeated the Government, who are the gainers? But no, no, I don't want to think about it." A heavy truck rumbled over the cobble stones outside. Again disconnected thoughts thronged to his mind. "We are the gainers. Arseny Ivanovich is of the same opinion. . . . Arseny Ivanovich. . . . The water is working our mill. . . . Exactly. Then we ought to be glad? . . . No, it isn't so. Who is responsible for the death of those people? For Sasha's death?

"And brother from his brother is torn,
And son and mother hurled asunder."

We ought to be glad? About what? But what's the matter with me? A people deserves the government it has. . . . Who said that? The words are meaningless. . . . Are the people responsible?"

He thought of Bolotovo, his father's estate in the government of Orel. It was an old manor-house, where he had been born and brought up. A house with a red roof and with colonnades in the Alexandrine style. Beyond the stream, lined with shrubbery, spread the village—Noviye Viselky. He saw the village elder Karp, and Tikhon the Lame One, a crippled little peasant in a torn shirt, and barefoot Vanka, the shepherd. He recalled a certain hot Sunday. He was standing near the mill-dam. The sun was setting. In the distance showed spots of red and blue and yellow—the women of the village. "So they are responsible. . . . Inspector Karp, Shepherd Vanka, and the housekeeper Malanya Petrovna. Responsible for what? For the fact that we have such a government. For the war.

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Inspector Karp responsible for our war with Japan, for our defeat at Tsu Shima? How ridiculous." But a moment later he thought: "But if Karp had not wanted it, we would have had no war? If the Karps had refused to go to war, there would have been no Tsu Shima? Then why are they going? Why are they the slaves of Plehve and Stoessel? . . . But suppose Inspector Karp should also not want a revolution? Nonsense. . . . By God, what nonsense. . . . What did Arseny Ivanovich say the other day? The infantry regiment and David. And Vanya . . . Vanya and Inspector Karp. . . . No, I mustn't think, I mustn't think. . . ." Bolotov closed his eyes in utter weariness. The street-lamp flickered and went out.

The sky began to pale in the east. The birds began to twitter cautiously in the apple-trees. Far away, in the Znamensky Church, the bells began to ring for morning prayers. Bolotov got up. Around him were the familiar objects of his shabby room: the table with its paper cover, on it the copper samovar, and on the walls oleographs from the magazine *Niva*. For the first time he felt sick of it all. The same objects, always the same. The same thoughts, the same words, the same Arseny Ivanovich, the same Berg, the same "work," the same danger, the same enemy—the secret service. And above all, the vagueness of everything. He was now convinced that falsehood lurked somewhere in his life. On the table strewn with cigarette butts lay sheets of paper, on which was written in a fine hand the editorial for the paper, *The Dawn*. He picked up the sheets and read: "We are concerned with political terror as one of the methods in our fight, as one element in our party tactics. Only a methodical system of terror, which con-

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forms to the other tactics and which is in harmony with the aims and general conditions of our fight, can come under discussion. . . .'' As he read these lines, they seemed to him cold, indifferent and hypocritical. He felt ashamed. ''Have I really written these words? A methodical system of terror. . . . A terror that arouses . . . that disorganizes . . . that dominates. . . . What childish arguments. And about what? About blood. About Vanya. About the living man Vanya, who will go and kill another man. . . . And we? And I? . . . He will kill and I shall write a profound and highly scientific treatise on 'The revolutionary initiative of the minority' and will try to prove that 'the terror of revenge, the terror of despair, the terror of fury is valueless,' and I shall say other things that are false and meaningless and futile. . . . And Inspector Karp will read it. . . . Will read it and will, of course, join us.'' He smiled. He thought of Doctor Berg, a tall, erect, bald-headed man, who always wore high collars. He recalled his voice, so expressive of self-content and self-assurance: ''In party matters preciseness is essential, comrade. . . .'' Then he recalled the flushed excited face of David. ''And David will die and so will Vanya. . . . They will both hang. And I shall write in the Party organ: 'Our comrades went to the gallows honourably and courageously. . . .' Wherein, then, lies the truth? It can not be in the fact that I rejoice, when tens of thousands of Russians drown in the Japanese sea, when Sasha drowns. . . . And it can not be in the fact that Vanya faces death, while I praise or condemn him, nor can it be in the fact that Inspector Karp rolls cigarettes with the paper on which my lightly written

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articles are printed. . . . Wherein, then, lies the truth?"

Dawn was breaking. Beyond the Okhta the sky flamed red, and fiery golden rays poured into the room. But the room only looked dingier, as when the sunlight reveals the deepening wrinkles on a withered face.

Bolotov felt he was denouncing his own life, which had seemed to him faultless. And for the last time he tried to check his disturbing train of thoughts. "Why is Arseny Ivanovich undisturbed? Everything is simple and clear to him. The revolution is a mathematical problem. Vanya goes forward and dies. Very well. Hail to the Party! Arseny Ivanovich directs matters. Very well. Hail to the Party! Division of labour. . . . And Berg, too, is undisturbed. But so are they responsible for bloodshed. Or, perhaps, they're not? Perhaps Vanya alone is responsible for everything? Then who is in the right? . . . 'I'm opening my heart to you' . . . Vanya opens his heart to me. . . . And how about me to him? How about us all to him? To us he is either a 'hero' or a 'fanatic of terror,' or—worst of all—'a worshipper of the bomb,' 'an unreasoning bomb-thrower.' . . . Wherein, then, lies the truth?"

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CHAPTER V

LIKE Bolotov, David, too, was often a prey to vague forebodings. But it was not the Party that worried him. He knew very little about the Party; only those sensational, but really insignificant, items, which are published in Party newspapers. He knew that all over Russia there were people, beloved comrades, who hated the things he hated and who demanded the things that he demanded. He also knew that in every city there were committees, and he thought that these committees were "working" under the supervision of distinguished, experienced and wise people, who lived in St. Petersburg. He had faith in those people. He would never have dared to ask who they were and whence they obtained their unlimited authority. It was enough for him to know that there were such people as Bolotov, Arseny Ivanovich, and Doctor Berg, and that they were constantly safeguarding the interests of the Party and would not let any harm come to it. Since he knew nothing of the Party itself, he imagined it to be still stronger and purer and more powerful than it actually was. But what he was chiefly concerned with was his own town with his little revolutionary committee. He was not disturbed by the fact that there were almost no revolutionists in his town. He thought that this committee was an exception, that in other more fortunate towns there were thousands of devoted Party members. He also thought that were the

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local comrades—the volunteer Seriozha, the private Avdeyev and the midwife Rachel—replaced by men like Bolotov or Arseny Ivanovich, the local work would have been improved and hastened. He thought that instead of three dozen soldiers the whole regiment could then be induced to join the Party. And instead of a few workmen's circles all the factory workers could be induced to attend the lectures about Karl Marx. But even as it was, there were many things to attend to. The days were spent in petty propaganda, in printing the committee's proclamations, in running about in the interests of the Party. He was too much taken up by this work to observe life around him—the wretched city-dwellers, the dark unknown life of priests, merchants, officials and peasants, of all those unseen and all-powerful forces upon which would depend the last victorious effort—the outcome of the revolution. And he believed that the Party was invincible and, like Bolotov, he had faith that "the stern day of judgment and wrath would come."

On arriving home from St. Petersburg David went directly from the railroad depot to his friend Seriozha.

He crossed Moscow Street and the solitary Soborna Plaza. His way lay along vacant lots, long vegetable gardens and low, wretched houses. The sky was grey. The wet birch-trees looked sad. Lilacs were abloom in the park. It was a leaden day. Although it was June, it looked like Autumn, like September.

David saw neither the rain, nor the dreary surroundings. "How nice Bolotov is," he thought, trudging along the wet pavements, "and so is Arseny Ivanovich, and all of them. And I, David Cohn, will now carry out the will of God, will die for the revolution, for the

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Party, for land and freedom. . . . How beautiful. . . . How good. . . . And, of course, the revolt will succeed, otherwise Bolotov would not have consented. . . ." It now seemed to him that Bolotov had given his permission and that his permission was equivalent to law. And it also seemed to him that only Bolotov knew that he, David Cohn, would die and that only Bolotov pitied and appreciated him. And though he could hardly imagine his own execution, the gallows, the hangman, his last days in prison, and though death was only a meaningless word to him, still he felt pity for himself. "But oh, well, two deaths are impossible and one is unavoidable," and he shook his curly flaxen hair. "How beautiful are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwellings, O Israel!"

"What's the good news?" was Seriozha's greeting.

"Hurrah! They gave their permission!"

Seriozha, a tall, bronzed soldier in an unbuttoned white blouse with epaulets, looked at him in surprise.

"What are you so glad about?"

"What do you mean?" David struck his hands together. "That's funny. . . . Suppose, they had not given their permission? Then what? Well?"

Seriozha took a cigarette from the table, slowly lighted it and answered quietly:

"One doesn't carry timber to the woods."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, they have come to a decision without St. Petersburg's permission."

"Without Petersburg?"

"Yes."

"Who decided? How?"

"The soldiers did."

"What? What? Speak up, for God's sake."

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"Nothing. Tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?"

"Yes, tomorrow."

"Impossible."

Seriozha shrugged his shoulders.

And, as it always happens when something that was distant and alarming suddenly becomes near and unavoidable, David felt that all his recent thoughts about death were valueless, just as leisurely and irresponsible words are valueless. He felt a strange and oppressive weight, as though some one were bearing him down to the ground. "Tomorrow. . . ." he thought. "Tomorrow. . . . Not in a month, not even in a week, but tomorrow. . . . God, give me strength. . . . God, tomorrow. . . ."

"And the committee?" he asked dully.

"What about the committee?"

"Have the committee decided?"

"Of course, they have."

"That's strange."

"What's strange?"

"How could they, without me?"

"Without you? Officer Voronkov hit Avdeyev yesterday, while he was on sentry duty."

"Well?"

"Avdeyev hit him back."

"Well?"

"Nothing. Avdeyev will be executed."

David dropped weakly into a chair. The dying samovar was singing noisily.

Looking out of the window, through the hazy mist, one could see the green sad-looking gardens.

"And you?" David asked finally.

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"What about me?"

"Are you in favour of a revolt? Why are you silent? Well, why don't you answer?"

"It's all futile," Seriozha answered in a low voice; "people will die in vain. But we mustn't argue."

"We mustn't argue," David repeated after him.

"We must obey," Seriozha finished.

"We must obey," David repeated.

"Yes, we must obey. You and I will put on officers' uniforms. Early in the morning, before the roll-call, we will go down to the barracks of the fourth company. I'm well known there. We will try to incite the soldiers to an uprising. Unless they're lying, the soldiers ought to respond."

"So . . . ." David began irresolutely.

"Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand. But listen."

"What?"

"Listen, I'm a Jew. . . ."

"Well?"

"Is it wise for me to disguise myself as an officer?"

"As you wish."

They were both silent. The samovar kept up its singing. Suddenly David felt an intoxicating joy, as though the thing he had wished for, had dreamed of, had come true. "Yes, yes, I shall die for the Party," he thought. His grey eyes darkened with excitement. He jumped up and began to pace the room. He stopped directly in front of Seriozha and stammering and gesticulating as usual he began to speak hotly, forgetful of self.

"Great is the God of our forefathers. . . . Do you remember Nekrasov, Seriozha? . . .

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"In all the world there can be
But two roads only for the free
From which to choose.
Test what your strength of pride is,
Test what your force of will is,
Then go and choose."

We have taken this road and we shall follow it until death. . . . And our soul shall not repent, and our hearts shall not be silent. Is it not so? Is it not so, Seriozha? Last year I witnessed a pogrom. . . . We had a self-defence squad of about twenty men. I belonged to the first division and on the first evening we stumbled on some hooligans. It was dark. We could hear them pillaging a house. People were crying for help, children weeping. Sasha Goldenberg was there. He ordered us to shoot. Bullets came back in answer. Sasha ordered us to shoot again. The hooligans scattered. Next day was Saturday. Sasha Goldenberg and I were at headquarters. An attorney had volunteered his house to us, so we were sitting there. The first group went to the market-place, the second to the outskirts of the city, the third remained with us. Well, we were sitting in readiness in the attorney's house. We waited. We hadn't slept for two nights. We were very sleepy. We felt tired and hungry. . . . We couldn't go near the window for fear of the Cossacks. So we dozed away, on chairs, on the floor, on beds. An hour passed. Well, two. . . . Well, perhaps, three. . . . Nothing happened. . . . Everything was still. . . . It was getting dark. We made no light, so as not to be seen from the street. We had had nothing to eat since morning. . . . The owner of the house would come in, look at us and sigh. . . . We felt depressed. . . . Suddenly, towards night the telephone rang. A merchant,

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by the name of Fishel, living on Kirillov Street, was calling. And Kirillov Street, you know, is at the other end of the town—not one of our squad was there. I answered the telephone:

"'What do you wish, Mr. Fishel?' I could hear his voice trembling: 'Is that you, David?' 'It's I,' I said. 'David, dear David, the hooligans are coming. . . .' 'Are they far away?' 'They just turned into Kirillov Street.' I said: 'Sh. . . . That's nothing. . . . You wait.' I turned to the men: 'Up!' All jumped up. In a moment all were gone, only the house-owner remained sighing. The telephone rang again. 'What do you wish?' 'David, for God's sake, David. . . . If you are a good Jew. . . .' I said: 'The self-defence have been sent out. Wait.' 'God be blessed, I shall wait. . . .' In five minutes the telephone again: 'David. . . .' 'What do you wish?' 'David, where is the self-defence? . . . The hooligans are five houses away. . . . They're burning everything. . . . I have children. . . .' I knew him well, this Fishel. He was a stout, red-faced man, who gave us money once in a while. I knew he was shivering there, the poor man. . . . Well, what could you tell him? He had children. . . . I said: 'Hide your wife and children somewhere, in the garret or in the cellar. . . .' I hung up the receiver and thought to myself: 'Suppose the boys come late? . . . What then?' A moment later the telephone again: 'God, God. . . . Good, merciful God of Israel! . . .' 'Where are the children?' I asked. And he could hardly answer: 'The children are in the . . . in the . . . cellar . . . chil . . . dren. . . .' 'Wait, I said, and have faith. The self-defence men are on their way.' But I thought to my-

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self: 'Yes, on the way, but suppose they have met Cossacks? . . . Well? What then? . . .' Again the telephone: 'The pogrom is right near me, two houses away. . . .' What could I do? I began to run about like a madman. . . . And the telephone kept ringing, ringing, ringing. . . . I picked up the receiver: 'Well, what?' I could hear him barking like a dog: 'Aa-aah. . . . David. . . . Our God is great! . . . David. . . . God. . . . Help! . . .'"

"Well?"

"Well, God saved him. They had almost got him. Another minute, just one minute, and he would have been done for. Our men came just in time. But, you know, I shall never in my life forget those few minutes, when the telephone kept ringing and ringing and our men were somewhere on the way. Even now I can see that man Fishel as he stood pale and trembling at the telephone, and the children in the cellar. . . . His wife and four little children. . . ."

David sat down at the table and emptied a glass of cold tea. Immediately he jumped up again. He was now sure that death was not terrible, but joyous, and that to die for the Party would be a rare, enviable honour. Now he was sure he had been born for this one purpose—to give up his life freely for the Cause. And eyes sparkling, he raised his voice to a shout in his exaltation:

"I'm happy, I'm proud that tomorrow will see the end! . . . I'm proud! . . . Don't you think we shall succeed? . . . You're silent again. . . . Why? . . . Tell me, have you no faith in our success?"

"It's in God's hands, David."

"Oh, you're always that way. . . . What do you

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mean in God's hands? I don't know of God. . . . My forefathers did, but I don't. . . . In my opinion:

"Test what your strength of pride is,
Test what your force of will is."

God won't order our life, we shall. . . . We shall order it, with our own blood. He can't help us, we must help ourselves. He can't protect us, we must do it ourselves. He will not down our foes, we must do it ourselves!"

Seriozha smiled. He had a kind smile, like a girl's.

"I think you have more God in you, than I," he said quietly.

"That's strange. . . . Why?"

"You saved Fishel, for instance."

"I saved Fishel?"

"Who else?"

"Not I; the self-defence."

"It's all the same. . . . You love Fishel."

"I love Fishel? I?"

"Of course."

"No, Fishel is not on our side. He's an enemy."

"You love even your enemy."

"What do you mean, love? Would you let him be killed?"

"Listen," Seriozha continued quietly, "tomorrow we are going to the barracks. You say we will die. Well, if we have to, we shall die. But that's not all; we may have to kill others too."

"There. . . . That's strange. . . . Well, of course, we'll kill. Did you ever witness a pogrom? Did you? I did. What is Fishel anyway? Fishel is still alive and deals in coal and eats bread and butter and contributes money to our self-defence. But I saw an

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old man. An old man lay naked, his legs were thin and blue and hairy, his skin was all wrinkled, and a nail was sticking out of his eye. . . . How's that? What will you say to that? What? . . . Has God allowed it? Your God? Was it His will? And I saw a woman. She was young, her hair in wild disorder, and her belly ripped up. . . . Shall we kill? . . . Of course, we'll kill. . . . I'll kill them joyfully. . . . Do you hear me? Joyfully!"

"Whom do you mean by 'them'?"

"Oh, what difference does it make? The officers, the ministers, the gendarmes, the police officials."

"Joyfully? You?"

"Yes, yes, yes. . . . I, David Cohn! . . . One must take revenge: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

Seriozha did not answer, but went over to the window and threw it open. The warm damp night filled the room. The rain was over and the clouds were gone. The Big Dipper shone triumphantly in the sky; and the Milky Way twinkled with its myriad stars.

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CHAPTER VI

THE army-barracks were situated outside of th city limits, on a dusty, badly paved road. Sub dued rumours of a revolt had been circulatin in the regiment for the past three months. People ha been declaring openly that "the officers were stealing," that "all officers were dogs" and that "they ought to b shot." This dissatisfaction, though secret, was rapidl growing. Its causes could not be definitely pointed ou Military service had always been detested, but till no the soldiers had been reconciled to it, as their grand fathers had been reconciled to whips and rods. Nov however, it had become unbearable. And the awakene members of the regiment were buzzing like bees in hive that has been disturbed. In the evening activ "volunteer-soldiers" would secretly enter the barrack There they delivered fiery, though ill comprehende speeches about "land," "Socialism" and "armed r volts." And it was easy to believe that at the first ca to revolt the soldiers would raise their guns and ki the officers and unfurl the red flag of revolution i place of the gold-trimmed regimental colours. But n one knew when this would take place. The officers wer aware of the disturbance among the soldiers and the were afraid of it. They were afraid when they foun a proclamation warning them of death, or when a sel constituted spy informed them of the seductive pro aganda. And the ubiquitous and mysterious enem

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the Party, rose in their esteem, and their hatred of it, their powerless fury, increased. It happened that an officer struck a soldier in the face. Though it had been a customary thing, this time the event raised a storm of violent protests and prophecies of revolt. The committee decided that the time was ripe and set the day.

When David and Seriozha left the house in the morning the sun was high in the heavens. The leaves, wet with the night's rain, were whispering to each other. The rays of the morning sun touched the pools that the rain had left and turned them to silver. It promised to be a hot cloudless day.

David felt uncomfortable in the uniform of an officer. He was particularly annoyed at the constant knocking of the sword against his high boots, and he had to hold it up with his left hand. He was self-conscious; it seemed to him that passers-by, the peasants and the women going to market, guessed that he was not an officer, but a Jew in disguise, and at any moment a policeman might stop and arrest him. Seriozha on the contrary walked with a swift, confident step.

David felt as if the sleepy streets and fences would never come to an end. At last, however, they saw the oppressive-looking brick building in the distance. There was a sentinel on duty at the gate. "Now, we'll surely be halted," David thought, "he surely won't let us pass." And again he felt as if a heavy load were weighing down his shoulders. But the sentinel, a tall soldier with a round kindly peasant face, raised his gun and stood at attention. The sun could not be seen from the paved four-cornered yard. Here and there a blade of grass thrust itself up between the stones. To their left in the furthest corner of the yard wash was drying

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on lines. From the old walls of the building the dirty windows looked down upon them. The steady buzz of voices filled the yard. A private without a hat, in patched trousers, with a pail in his hands, ran across the yard. The sporty office-clerk saluted them, and disappeared behind a door, on which "Office" was written. Seriozha made his way confidently to the soldiers' quarters. "Is it possible that they'll let us enter?" David thought. "Oh, what's the difference. . . . I only wish it would be over. . . ." Even at the entrance to the soldiers' quarters they were not stopped by the sentinel.

The long narrow room was crowded with soldiers. Their guns were standing peacefully near the walls in gun-racks. The sun glittered on the smooth barrels. The crowded place smelled of food and tobacco. David was suddenly gripped by terror. It seemed impossible to escape from the place. At salute, his stout body swaying as he walked, a sergeant-major was approaching to meet them. "Here comes the end," David thought. When Seriozha noticed the sergeant, he frowned, but made a resolute step forward. He looked straight into the sergeant-major's eyes and without giving him a chance to say anything, asked in an abrupt, gruff manner:

"Where is your revolver?"

"My God, what is he doing?" David thought. "Now it's surely all over, everything is lost. . . . He won't give up his revolver. . . . And why are the soldiers standing like statues?" But though he was certain that all was lost and that they could escape only by a miracle, he felt the contagion of Seriozha's daring and repeated after him.

"Where is your revolver?"

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The sergeant evidently did not understand the question. Standing at attention by sheer force of habit he regarded the stranger officers with a perplexed gaze. Silence reigned in the room. It was as quiet as a field.

"I ask you, where is your revolver?" Seriozha raised his voice.

"Your. . . ."

"Silence!"

Seriozha stretched his arm and began to unbutton the string of the revolver-bag on the sergeant's breast. He did it slowly and in cold blood. The string was caught in the sergeant's epaulets, and he lowered his head obediently and took off the revolver-bag.

"And now lead the company out into the yard."

"Your. . . . Honour. . . ."

"Silence! . . ." Seriozha ordered, turning red in the face. David saw a small black revolver glitter in his hand.

The soldiers, without waiting for the command, picked up their guns, put on their knapsacks and with their eyes on the ground filed out into the yard. Seriozha was standing at the door with his hands in his pockets and his feet wide apart and, still frowning, let them pass by. When the company was in formation near the wall, he slowly advanced. The sun played on the pavement and on the bayonets. It seemed to David that many years had passed since that unhappy moment when he had entered the barracks yard. He wished he could turn back. He wished he could run—run from this trap, from these stone walls and steel bayonets, from the inescapable terror which, he felt with absolute certainty, was about to strike them. But he knew it was impossible to run.

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"Order!" Seriozha gave the command.

The company became silent and motionless, as if the command had not been given by Seriozha, but by a stern, cruel officer. Two rows of white shirts stretched in an even line along the brick wall. Every soldier had his gun raised at the same angle and had his cap pulled down over his forehead, his head raised, and the same pallor on every strained face. At the extreme right of the company, not far from David, stood the black-bearded sergeant-major, his forlorn eyes blinking unceasingly.

"Comrades! . . ."

"Will they really let him speak?" David wondered. "Will they really listen to him?" It all seemed like a dream—the barracks, the soldiers, Seriozha. And should he but waken, he would find himself in his little cosy student's room with everything going on as usual.

"Comrades! . . ." Seriozha repeated somewhat louder.

But suddenly they heard the sound of heavy steps. David looked around; he saw people slowly advancing past the wash-lines, from the direction of the office, towards them. Seriozha immediately reached for his revolver. The company fixed their stony glances on him. The row of white shirts remained unchanged. The caps were still lowered over their foreheads. The black-bearded sergeant-major kept his erect pose. The golden epaulets of the advancing men sparkled in the sunlight.

Seriozha turned red in the face just as he had before in the soldiers' room. He did not yet know why, but he felt that the revolt would not succeed. And disregarding the soldiers he turned around and directed his steady steps towards the advancing officers. They were very

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near now and David could see every one of them clearly. At one end a stout bloated lieutenant with eye-glasses was moving his stout legs rapidly. Next to him a tall officer in a worn uniform and unshined boots was walking proudly. The others appeared to David as one living mass. He could only see that there were many of them, about ten. And with the realization that they were many and that it was useless to resist them, came that joy again which he had felt the evening before. "I shall die. . . . For land and freedom!" he thought, following Seriozha and feeling happy for no reason. "Here it is . . . Here!" But he did not dare to look back. He did not dare to take a look to see what the company was doing, what the black-bearded sergeant was doing. "Only they must not shoot us from the back. . . . Not from the back. . . . Let them be honest . . . for the revolution. . . . Beautiful are thy dwellings, Oh Israel . . ."

There was a noise behind them. David winced and closed his eyes. When he opened them again he saw Corporal Georgy Gabayev, his comrade and adherent, leave the ranks and run up to him and his companions. When he joined them, he was flushed, his black eyes were burning and he was breathing heavily. They were in the centre of the yard. They could hear the stout lieutenant say something. But they continued their rapid walk to the gate, which was still far off and seemed almost beyond their reach. It was hard to walk. It seemed to David that he had heavy weights on his feet instead of boots.

"Shoot!" The command reached them indistinctly.

David did not hear the shots, but the bullets buzzed over his head. A blue cloud arose from among the of-

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ficers and vanished away in the air. Now he became conscious that they were shooting at them.

Seriozha stopped. An unexpected shot whizzed past David's ear. Gabayev was shooting with his gun. Then without knowing what he was doing, David raised his revolver and began to aim. The trigger was stiff and the revolver was shaking in his hand. But when finally he had taken aim at somebody's chest, he half closed his eyes and pulled the trigger. This once done he could not stop any more. He fired without aiming, not even knowing why he did it until he ran out of bullets. Then he saw the yellow fire from under his eye-lashes. The air smelled of gunpowder. The stout lieutenant was down on the ground, resting his right hand on the stones. His hat had fallen off his head and at his feet a pool of thick sticky blood was forming. David did not grasp that he had killed a human being.

Seriozha went on without looking back or shooting. Gabayev kept pace with him with his head down. David ran to join them. At the gate the sentinel blocked their way. The same tall soldier, who a little while ago had saluted them, now threatened them with menacing and furious countenance. Gabayev made a wide motion with his hand and before David could grasp the situation the sentinel swayed, tried to grasp the tri-coloured sentry-box, but fell face downward into the soft dust. David felt and understood nothing; he only knew that something terrible and irreparable had happened; and he was only anxious not to remain behind. There was no committee, no uprising, no revolution. There was only a soft ploughed field, in which their feet were sticking and which they had to cross. Beyond were the woods. In the woods, he believed, was safety.

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CHAPTER VII

AS Misha Bolotov, a red-cheeked eighteen-year-old gymnasiast, who had just finished his disgusting examinations, passed the station next to Miatlevo early one morning, he was seized with a joyful impatience. He put his close-cropped head out of the car window and half closing his eyes to the sunlight looked out lovingly at the old familiar landmarks. Beyond the Mozharovsky woods sparkled the gilded cross of the Holy Trinity Church. Beyond the marshes he could see the dark-green road to Orel. He caught a glimpse of the village Chishmy. And at last came the little God-forsaken village Miatlevo. A red tin-roofed station-building, an iron water-tower, a long-haired telegrapher and the country hotel of the merchant Blokhin.

A carriage with three horses with bells on was waiting for him. Driver Tikhon, a red, bearded peasant in a sleeveless shirt and a low hat with a peacock's feather, was slowly fixing up the harness. He met Misha with a smile. To Misha it seemed that it was not Tikhon smiling, but the hot sun, the fields of oats and the white, tender birch-trees. The stone city was no more. School days were over.

"Chaly is leading and where is Zviezdochka (Little Star)?" Misha asked in disappointment, going up to the horses. Chaly, a heavily built strong horse, was bending his sweating neck so that his big silver bell tinkled. Golubka, the bay mare on his left, her head raised, was

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smelling the air, her rosy sensitive nostrils wide open. Misha embraced her and laid his cheek against her warm nose. He kissed her, inhaling the familiar acrid odour of the mare's body, and whispered caressing words in her ear.

"How are you, little one? Glad to see you, Golubka. And where is Zviezdochka?" He turned to Tikhon.

"Zviezdochka?" Tikhon repeated in a sing-song voice. "Zviezdochka is lame. We use Zolotoy in her place. But he is not a horse, Mikhail Nikolayevich, he's a rascal."

Rascal Zolotoy, foaming head bent down, was pawing the ground. Misha looked at him sadly. Last summer he had trained Zolotoy for riding, and he felt sorry to see him in harness. He sighed and stroked his shaggy golden mane. Tikhon guessed his thoughts.

"The stallion Zviezdochka of last year is now a fine horse. He'd be fine for riding, Mikhail Nikolayevich."

They passed Vypolzovo, Chemodanovo, Sukholom. All around them, as far as the eye could reach, stretched an ocean of yellow unripe corn. Misha could see Tikhon's back, the broad body of Chaly, the dusty road and the blue sky. It was a hot day. Only a few tiny clouds were scattered in the sky. The air smelled of grass and fields. Chaly snorted. The horses' bells tinkled.

They passed the Mozharovsky woods and entered on the Orel road. Chaly tossed his mane and immediately began to run faster. His big ears kept swinging in time under the harness-arch. The other two horses stretched their bodies and their bells too were set swinging. Golubka ran with short strong steps and Zolotoy tried to keep up with her. Mile-posts and telegraph-posts passed in rapid succession. "Tak, tak, tak . . ."

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Misha thought rhythmically, looking at Chaly and almost dying in impatient expectation. "Faster, dear one..." But Tikhon pulled up the lines and Chaly reduced his speed. The Bolotov estate appeared in the distance: a red roof and a green garden.

Nikolay Stepanovich Bolotov, an old retired general, was standing on the high whitewashed steps and was looking out through the avenue of linden-trees with one hand shading his eyes from the sun. The carriage passed through the gate with its stone lions, and the sun's rays began to fall through the leaves and played on the horses' backs and Tikhon's shoulders. Misha could not wait any longer and jumped from the carriage and ran up to his father. He hardly had time to greet him, when a pair of arms embraced him, and his sister Natasha kissed him heartily. He heard light steps in the hall and felt his mother was coming out.

After a long-drawn-out festive dinner Misha went out into the garden. He was home again after a long absence. He had to see everything, greet every tree, every stone, every shady lawn. In the garden and in the yard everything was as of old. The round dog Sharik with his shaggy tail and chocolate-coloured hair ran up to Misha and smelled his boots. On seeing Misha the red hunting-dog Vesta whined and licked him on his lips. The same housemaids, Lukerya and Dasha, greeted him with lowered eyes. The same housekeeper, Malanya Petrovna, in her usual blue skirt, passed to the cellar for currant-water. And as of old the garden paths were overgrown with burdock, wild hemp and nettles; and the lilacs were abloom; and the green gooseberries were just as delicious as ever. And the horses were chewing their oats peacefully in the stalls.

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At one end the garden went out upon the woods, and the woods were still there smelling of fallen trees and resin. Misha sat down near a shady stream. Natasha, breaking the long stems of ferns, moved up to her brother and said timidly looking into his happy face:

"We thought Sasha had been killed. We had had no letters from him. Papa was crying all the time."

"And Mamma?" Misha asked with quick concern.

"Mamma, you know, keeps quiet."

"And now?"

"Now we have a letter. He writes he was taken prisoner. Thank God!" Natasha crossed herself. "Why do people make wars?"

Misha knew of the Tsu Shima battle. But he never thought of his brother, of the fact that he might have been killed. Natasha's words made no impression on him. It made no difference to him whether his brother was a prisoner or not. Under the influence of comrades, pamphlets, newspapers and discussions Misha gradually had come to look upon all Russian adversities with that common indifference, which at that time was considered proper and deserving. "That's just what they deserve," he thought, though he could not say who "they" were and why "they" deserved to drown, or die, or to be captured by the Japanese. Without answering Natasha's question, he asked:

"And why is mamma in black?"

"Mamma is always in black now. Do you know anything about Andriusha?"

"No, not a thing."

"Why doesn't he write?"

"I don't know."

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Natasha was lost in thought. A woodpecker was at his work in the thick of the woods.

"Listen, Misha, tell me . . . I have long wanted to ask you . . . Misha, tell me, what's Andriusha doing there? . . . Where is he? I know he's badly off . . . He's very badly off . . . Misha, is it true that he is a Socialist?"

Misha nodded silently.

Natasha was seventeen years old. She had blue eyes, flaxen hair, and long slender hands. She studied at home in winter in Moscow and in summer in their Bolotov estate. About the Party she only knew by hearsay. But she was accustomed to think of the revolutionists as remarkable, self-sacrificing people. The Party seemed like a mysterious monastery with a strict monastic life. She was only troubled by the fact that revolutionists kill people, throw bombs and fight at barricades. And it oppressed her now to think that Andriusha, who was almost a stranger to her, Andriusha, whose portrait was on her table, a tall, strong, unknown man, her brother, that he too was a revolutionist and, consequently, a martyr and a murderer. It became clear to her why he did not write. She recalled the words of her favourite evangelist Luke: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Misha was not oppressed, he was overjoyed by the fact that his brother was a member of the Party and a revolutionist. He knew very little about the Party, not much more than his sister. He had secretly read a few forbidden books in the gymnasium. According to these books the life of revolutionists seemed a life of heroic

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deeds and earnest sacrifice. He hardly understood the aims of the Socialists, but he had faith that, whatever their aim was, it must be just and good. He often heard that the Socialists were the only honest people and that every self-respecting human being in Russia must be a revolutionist. And though he knew neither Party, nor Socialism, nor the revolution, though he had no idea of terror and did not even think of it, still in a youthful spirit of inspiration he had resolved that he must serve the people. And after he had come to such a resolve, the strange and distant Party became near, beloved. And he was sincerely ready to give his life not only for the people, but for the Party, for Andriusha and for the mysterious committee.

"Misha . . ." Natasha called softly.

"What?"

"Misha, and you . . . have you thought about it?" Catching her meaning, Misha nodded again.

"Well, Misha?"

Misha did not answer.

"Misha . . ."

"What?"

"Misha, aren't you afraid?"

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid . . . to kill?"

Misha became excited.

"Oh, Natasha, to kill . . ." He rose from the grass and began to talk excitedly. "Why do you ask? . . . And they . . . Don't they kill? . . . Don't they hang people? . . . Don't they shoot workingmen to death? . . . How about the ninth of January? . . . Don't oppression and misery reign all about us? . . . Natasha, I can't stand it . . . I can't!"

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"But, Misha, to kill . . ."

"And Andriusha?"

"What about Andriusha?"

"Doesn't Andriusha kill?"

Natasha was silent. She recalled the words of the same evangelist Luke: "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you."

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CHAPTER VIII

NIKOLAY STEPANOVICH BOLOTOV, a retired general, was a man of iron principles. To him the words "Fatherland," "Church," "Czar," were not merely so many solemn words, but the whole meaning of his life was contained in them, just as to his son Andriusha the meaning of his whole life was contained in their opposites "Republic," "Revolution," "Socialism." Like everybody else, Nikolay Stepanovich felt that something new was astir in Russia, but he could not grasp its significance. He knew his Fatherland was in danger. Every morning the newspapers told of defeats in the theatre of war. But he never asked himself whether this bloody war was not a government scheme and who was responsible for it. Russia was at war with Japan and Japan was winning. In the face of such an unparalleled disgrace, all differences of opinion ought to have been silenced. When a ship is sinking we do not try the guilty parties, but we make an effort to save the ship. When there is a fire we do not seek the cause but try to extinguish it. He thought the responsibility for Russia's misfortune lay with those who held the army up to ridicule, with those who in their madness had begun the war and now led the armies so blunderingly—with Kuropatkin, Plehve, Alekseyev, the commissary, the students, the Jews, the Poles, the Finns and in short with all Russian citizens. He did not see that he was thus pronouncing judgment upon his

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Fatherland, a judgment which was more severe than the one pronounced by the Japanese at Mukden and Tsu Shima. Yet, if Russia had been winning and Japan losing, he would have rejoiced in the war. It never entered his mind that every war is unjustifiable. He looked upon war with the obedient eyes of the soldier, a law sanctioned by ages, a law about which it was futile and blasphemous to argue. If any one tried to contradict him, he answered: "There is no power that does not come from God," and these words were full of meaning to him. He was proud of his son Sasha. Sasha was doing his honest duty to the "Fatherland" and "Czar."

The Fatherland was in danger. He knew it from the fact that daily the newspapers brought disquieting reports about murders, executions, strikes, agrarian uprisings, about secret party organization, about court-martials and bombs. He thought that even if there was lawlessness in Russia, it was due to the fact that the Czar knew nothing about it, and that if the Czar should find out that it existed he would soon put an end to it by his God-given right. When his second son Andrey Bolotov was arrested for the first time, he accepted it as a mistake, as a sad misunderstanding on the part of the gendarmes, for whom he had a profound contempt. He went immediately to St. Petersburg, intervened with the minister and threatened the shameless secret service. He could not admit that his own son, the clever, honest Andriusha, could have become a "criminal," a man who was dangerous to the "Fatherland." But when Andriusha without having asked his father's consent left the Technological Institute and disappeared from St. Petersburg, he began to suspect the bitter truth. But he

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stubbornly clung to the belief that his son would repent, and he found solace in the story of the prodigal son. "My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

To the wife of Nikolay Stepanovich, Tatyana Mikailovna, it made no difference whether Russia was to be a democratic republic, a constitutional monarchy or an autocracy. Like her son Andrey she looked upon every war as upon a bloody crime, a crime before God and man, particularly so the Japanese War, perhaps, because her two first-born were taking part in it and were risking their lives. Her womanly instinct, the sharpened instinct of a mother, made her feel that the most essential thing did not lie in what men thought but in what they did. It seemed to her that it lay somewhere else, but she could not very well express it, and when she tried to, she simply spoke in a general open-hearted manner, saying that "one must live according to the teachings of love." She did not know herself what it meant. It seemed to her that both of her sons lived according to the teachings of Christ, though both were killing people. Both did their useful work. Both were exposed to danger. She remembered them as they had been years ago when they had cried in her arms and sucked her motherly breasts; and she humbly prayed for both that their lives might be spared.

When her youngest son Mikhail came home, she alone noticed the change that had taken place in him. His voice had become deeper, his youthful face thinner, and his blue eyes sparkled with a restless fire. Though now he was near her it seemed to her that her love for the older children was greater; still she unconsciously surrounded him with unceasing tenderness and hidden care.

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She understood that he had already come to some decision of his own, with his eighteen-year-old mind, and his verdict would prove to be a source of new sorrow to her. She knew that he, too, her third and last son, was gradually becoming a man, and, consequently, was going away to his difficult, manly work, which she could not understand. She could not hold him back, and to her prayer for her older children she added a prayer that his life, too, might be spared.

In the middle of July a letter came from Sasha. All assembled in the billiard room; it was high and cool, with tapestries on the walls and family portraits in gilded frames. It overlooked the garden, and the leaves of the old linden-tree, which had been planted by the great-grandfather of Nikolay Stepanovich, brushed the windows. Nikolay Stepanovich, a vigorous, old man, clean shaven, with colour in his full cheeks, took Sasha's letter out from the side-pocket of his military coat and unfolded it carefully. He put on his gold-rimmed glasses, looked severely at his wife and children, as if to make sure they were ready and willing to listen, and began to read in a loud, solemn voice. Sasha wrote a clear, short description of the Tsu Shima battle, without complaining of faultfinding. His calm, precise phrases reminded Misha of their author, a broad-shouldered young officer, quiet and cold-eyed. And while Nikolay Stepanovich was reading, Misha had the same feeling as he had always had in the presence of his brother, a mixture of love and respect and fear. "When the Japanese officers boarded our ship"—Nikolay Stepanovich's voice trembled—"they lowered the flag of Andrey, raised their own flag of the rising sun, and stationed their sentry. Our commander, who was

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exhausted by the sleepless night and the battle, attacked the kegs of wine. A lot of the men got drunk. I saw one of our soldiers fall down intoxicated. A Japanese sentry lay down his gun, went over to him, wiped his face and returned to his post. . . .'' Nikolay Stepanovich stopped and covered his eyes with his white handkerchief.

''Thank God, Sasha isn't wounded,'' said Tatyana Mikhailovna. She listened to the reading with her beautiful grey head slightly bent, trying not to miss the slightest word. The one thing she gathered, and that sunk into her heart, was that Sasha was alive and out of danger.

''What have they done?'' Nikolay Stepanovich kept on repeating in a voice tremulous with emotion. Misha, who had been silent all this time, flushed a deep crimson.

''Who, papa?''

''Who?'' demanded Nikolay Stepanovich angrily, shaking the cherrywood cigarette holder.

''All are guilty . . . and those too . . . those long-haired ones. They don't study, take up politics, start a revolution, and give them a constitution . . . as if they were Germans, God forbid . . . and the Fatherland is perishing . . . They have lowered the flag of Andrey and raised the Japanese flag . . . and we are glad . . . that's the way . . . They don't understand it's a dishonour. Shame! . . . shame,'' he shouted as if everybody were contradicting him. Then he continued, ''They say that court-martials are cruel . . . Indeed, cruel? Here we are at war, blood is being spilled, here are bombs, strikes and robberies of the landowners. The papers say the peasants of the Saratov province are

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burning the manor-houses . . . and they are to be pardoned? No, they ought to be hanged . . . Hanged!" He beat his cigarette holder on the arm of the chair.

Natasha, long since become accustomed to her father's furious outbursts, did not attempt to answer him. She was sorry for him. Those were not his own ideals, she felt, and his threats were not very terrifying. But to Misha the words of Nikolay Stepanovich sounded like an undeserved insult. It was his duty to prove his father wrong and explain that Andriusha and the revolutionists were not those "long-haired" ones but those Minins and Pozharskys who were destined to save Russia from disgrace and dissolution. Glancing at Natasha, he said in a voice bursting with excitement, "The ones you're speaking of, they're not the only ones who ought to be hanged, papa."

Nikolay Stepanovich grew pale. "Here, here's how you have raised them!" He turned to Tatyana Mikhailovna breathless with anger. "A stripling has the audacity to argue! . . . and with whom? With me! . . . with his father . . . He has the audacity to argue! . . . Take care, Mikhail, you too . . . Take care! . . . and you, too. . . . Mikhail, you too. . . .! Take care." He shook his finger at him. "I shall not allow it! I shall not! . . . I have had enough disgrace brought upon me. . . . Follow the example of Aleksandr, not of the others." He alluded again to the son the thought of whom haunted him painfully. "They have no respect for their parents, no love for their Fatherland, no reverence for the Czar, no fear of God. . . . Scoundrels!" he shouted hoarsely and left the room slamming the door behind him.

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"No, say what you will, I can't understand," Misha began excitedly, trying not to look at his mother. "Heroes are giving up their lives for the people, for the happiness of all, and they say they ought to be hanged. . . . The most abominable outrages are taking place, and everybody stands for them . . . but when more people want to fight against them . . . they ought to be hanged? . . . What does it mean?"

Tatyana Mikhailovna looked at her son sorrowfully. He was very handsome in his anger. Tall and blue-eyed, like all her children, face flushed, he paced the room with rapid strides. She sighed.

Misha turned to her. She was still sitting on the couch, her head slightly bent and fingering her black, woollen shawl. Misha suddenly felt ashamed, and was impelled to explain that he couldn't stand it any longer, that he loved the Party, believed in Andriusha and wanted to serve the people and the revolution. But an indefinable feeling held him back. His mother's bent head, sorrowful eyes and mournful silence were eloquent of the fact that she understood him, and words would be futile. He walked slowly to the window and looked into the garden. The linden-trees were rustling. Gardener Kuzima was watering the beds of geraniums, petunias, mignonette and gilliflowers—the beloved flower-beds of Nikolay Stepanovich—with a long-necked green watering can. The room was quiet now. Tatyana Mikhailovna broke the awesome silence and said: "Have you thought about us, Misha?"

Misha made no reply, at a loss what to say. To hide his tears, to his mind a sign of weakness, he covered his face with his hands and ran out into the garden, down

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to the river. As he made his way through the damp grass by the shore, the smell of reeds and water came to him. Directly above drifted creamy clouds of various shapes. Their trackless drifting made him feel still sadder and more restless.

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CHAPTER IX

THE summer of 1905 passed with its assassinations, strikes, demonstrations and that ominous foreboding—the daring revolt on the battleship *Prince Potiomkin of Taurus.* The autumn came and with it the general strike.

Although Arseny Ivanovich and Bolotov, and Vanya, and Seriozha and David and all the numerous comrades who had been daily expecting the revolution, had believed in its irresistible nearness and had faith in a regenerating victory, they did not understand that their work was being brought to a finish and that the revolution was now under way. Only yesterday they had been busily engaged in their secret Party work. They had been busy on the committees, preparing books, organizing peasants, workingmen and soldiers, writing proclamations, and delivering fiery speeches. In a word, only yesterday the solidly built machine had been humming and nobody could have guessed that the revolution was so close at hand. But not only the revolutionists were taken by surprise, but even the gendarmes, the spies, the officials, the ministers and all who feared it and felt its inevitable approach. They could not believe that these unprecedented events which were taking place before their very eyes made up the dreadful revolution they had tried in vain to forestall. Finally it came, that long expected tomorrow. Like a bolt of lightning, the great general strike burst down upon them. A fantastic dream came true.

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How it came about no one knew and no one could explain. Just which of the Government's orders filled the bitter cup to overflowing?

Just which revolutionist set the example of supreme daring? Whose innocent blood warmed the northern pole? Thus the Neva, the great, full-watered river, sleeps in its stone cradle, till a vivifying April ray descends from the bastion of St. Peter and Paul. The snow now sparkles like diamonds, but the streams have not yet begun to run and the ice remains immovable. A second ray follows the first. Above the fortress the St. Petersburg sun begins to shine—pale, feeble, yet all-powerful. And unseen, secretly, down on the frozen depths of the Neva washing the Alekseyev ravelin, gurgling streams begin to chatter. The murmuring waters join them. At last with a mighty crash the Neva breaks through, and the clanging, brittle ice carries all before it.

When the Manifesto of the 17th October was published, Bolotov did not immediately grasp its meaning. He carefully read through the prophetic pages about the convening of the Imperial Duma, about freedom of the press, freedom of conscience, of unions and meetings; but he could not assimilate the words. It was not until he encountered a boy on the Nevsky selling caricatures of Witte and bought one of them and read the cynically humorous legend ridiculing the all-powerful minister, that he really understood that a change had taken place in Russia, and whatever the new order might prove to be, the old one, outworn and discarded, would never return. For the first time he experienced a joyful sense of deliverance. All the puzzling problems vanished, all those problems which had oppressed him of

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late. He could now forget about terror, about Vanya, about death, about his right to live. Everything was clear. It seemed that the most important goal unquestionably the most important one, had been reached. The road to the promised land was open—the road to the just and free ordering of Russia. But the feeling was not unalloyed. It was poisoned by doubt! How to adapt himself to the new life, how to live not underground, without the committee, without conspiracy work, how to shake off the Party habits, how arrange, not the world, but his own ant-like life? And for the first time asking himself what he knew and what he could do, Bolotov was surprised to have to admit that, except for his revolutionary experience, he was without position, and that except for adapting himself to the life of a conspirator, he had acquired nothing from the Party. The life of privation of the millions of the people was to him unknown, unintelligible and out of reach. He fairly regretted that everything was over so soon, the revolution won, and he, like a discharged day-labourer, left homeless and forsaken. With bitterness he recalled the ingenious words of Arseny Ivanovich: "The devil was proud and he fell from Heaven. Pharaoh was proud and he was drowned in the ocean, we are proud and we are good-for-nothing." The other feeling that Bolotov was experiencing and that called forth both hope and wrath, was a deep-rooted distrust of the Manifesto with its proclamation of liberties. He saw the face of Vera Andreyevna, erstwhile exhausted, but now peaceful; the self-complacent smile on Doctor Berg's face, as if he were the one who had led the strike; he heard the hoarse voice of Arseny Ivanovich: "Now, benefactor, it's all done for. You can't turn it out with a lever, you

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can't grind it with a stone." He saw and heard all this and still could not throw off the bitter feeling of doubt imbued in him through these years. He was not perplexed by the Government's capitulation, but by the fact that capitulation had come so soon without a stubborn fight, almost without victims. Seeing how suddenly, irrespective of his will or effort, the great strike had started, how rapidly it had spread, how deeply it affected all Russia, he understood and reluctantly admitted that it was not the Party nor the committees that had organized it, and it was not in the Party's power to retard or to hasten the triumphal course of events. This impotence of the Party, which must have been clear to all Russia, was to him a source of constant grief.

His doubts did not last long. One day as he was hurrying to the editorial room of the Party press, which the new law permitted to appear, he passed along the Admiral Prospect decked in holiday trimmings.

Darkened by the autumn wind Neva's waters were angrily rising in heavy, leaden waves. The air was damp. The thick, yellow Petersburg fog was beginning to lift. Crowds were filling the Aleksandr Park, strewn with fallen leaves, the grey, silent crowds, which seemed to be intent on some important work common to all. They were streaming from the park to the Admiral Prospect and thence to the Isaakieva Plaza. Here and there red flags were hanging in tatters. On the black branches of the trees and on the iron posts surrounding the park, were perched hungry street-urchins in heavy boots and with ragged hats pulled over their ears. A young student from the Technological Institute, with coat unbuttoned, was haranguing the crowd in a thin, timid voice: Comrade! . . . Manifesto! . . . Lib-

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erty!" Through the cold mist Bolotov could hear the familiar words. He saw the crowds of people and above them the young face of the speaker. He could not get away. Everywhere—in front of him, behind him, to his left and to his right, he was hemmed in by wet broad backs, by shoulders, and breasts. Suddenly the student shouted something that Bolotov could not make out. A sudden tremor went through the crowd; and then, after a troubled moment, the wall of human bodies broke into a wild stampede, madly, breathlessly trampling one another like a herd of frightened beasts. Children wailed, mothers wept, men turned pale and tried to push their way through the crowd with clenched fists. There was the sound of the tramping of hundreds of muffled feet. Cries of fear awoke Bolotov to attention. On the deserted Admiral Prospect, closing the exits from the park, a solid mass of soldiery in wet, grey uniforms were forming a barrier. Somehow these uniforms in their oppressive monotony awoke an unreasoning panic in him. "Will they really shoot?" flashed through Bolotov's mind, but he immediately laughed away the thought. "Shoot? But we have freedom!" He reassured himself. At the same moment a strange, sharp report unexpectedly cut the air. Bolotov saw a small, ugly bundle drop from a bare, consumptive-looking linden-tree. A boy of about ten lay awkwardly on the dark, wet path, as quietly as though he had not fallen from above, but had lain down of his own accord. From afar one might have thought him sound asleep.

Bolotov bent over the child. From under his big hat, which probably belonged to his father, showed a slender neck, and a head covered with fair curling hair. His shoulders were very narrow. A patched-up shirt stuck

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to his narrow, childish back and frail little body. Without any thought of what he was doing, Bolotov touched the boy's shoulder cautiously, but instantly withdrew his fingers, got up and went slowly past the soldiers towards the Nevsky. "Shall I turn around? Or shall I not turn? Shall I run?" He thought, feeling a fevered trembling seize him. "What is it? Am I a coward?" The thought was degrading; so, straightening himself to his full height, he deliberately slackened his pace and went along the Nevsky in the centre of the pavement. He found he was alone. There was not a soul near him.

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CHAPTER X

EARLY in December, when the snow had become solid enough for sleigh-riding and the frost was beginning to decorate the window-panes, they began to say in St. Petersburg that barricades were unavoidable. Bolotov and his comrades knew that no orders could force people to revolt, if they did not desire to; but though they knew the futility of their deliberations they considered it their duty to the Party to attempt to solve this problem of countrywide importance; to decide whether or not a strike should take place, that is to say, an all-Russian armed revolt, which they thought was bound to be victorious.

The meeting was fixed for eleven o'clock in the evening on the Kamennoöstrov Prospect, in the isolated home of the merchant Valabuyev. At the entrance, built in the Russian style, a butler opened the oak doors noiselessly. The comrades removed their coats, shook off the snow and ascended a marble staircase to the study on the second floor. There they were met by Valabuyev, a stout, over-fed man, the flesh of whose face hung in folds and who wore his hair cut in pompadour fashion. He was dressed in English style: tight trousers, a loose black coat, and a coloured vest. Though unacquainted with any of his prospective guests, he greeted them good-naturedly, like an old friend. Arseny Ivanovich's patriarchal beard filled him with awe and respect.

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When Bolotov entered, all the comrades were assembled except Arkady Rosenstern and a man from Moscow by the name of Vladimir Gliebov, or, as he was called in the Party, Volodya.

In a dim corner of the room sitting on a couch under a life-size portrait of Tolstoy, Vera Andreyevna was conversing with an old Jew, with long, thick hair. Bolotov knew him; his name was Zalkind. He knew he had suffered all his life in prisons and had served the revolution as well as he could. But Bolotov did not like him. He was repelled by his greenish, sickly face covered with red pimples, his little inflamed eyes, his untidy coat, and his exaggerated friendliness and familiarity. Bolotov was ashamed of this repugnance, accusing himself of injustice and prejudice. So, he tried to be particularly cordial to the old man, who when he saw Bolotov, greeted him affably, extending his wet hand without rising, and saying:

"How are you? What news? How do you do?"

"Thank you. How are you?" Bolotov answered with a forced smile, and immediately felt that mean, intoxicating irritation which had tormented him the whole summer. Looking at Zalkind with hatred he thought:

"What is he doing here? What does he know?" His disgust was growing.

Vera Andreyevna, in her usual, plain, black dress, lighting one cigarette after another, was telling a long story. Bolotov heard her exhausted, monotonous voice. She had been arrested and confined in the Poltava district prison. Zalkind listened and sighed in sympathy.

"You know," Vera Andreyevna was saying, lighting her extinguished cigarette, "few books, and those exclusively religious. . . . No visitors. . . . Boring. . . ."

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"Really how long were you confined?" Zalkind sighed again.

"Twenty-one months."

Bolotov ceased listening. "My God," he thought, "what are they talking about? Always the same, the same, the same, and all about the same."

At the tea table, where a silver samovar stood, Arseny Ivanovich, Valabuyev and Doctor Berg were seated in arm-chairs. Bolotov went over to the table. Arseny Ivanovich, stirring his tea with a spoon and looking slyly at Valabuyev, was talking in his bass voice:

"You need not worry, my benefactor. . . . It's all very clear. . . . What if they did arrest the Council of Workmen's Delegates? Water will find its course. Just wait, the constitutional assembly will give the land to the people. Now we shall not compromise on half-measures. No, sir, now it's either everything or nothing." He smiled and put some preserves in his tea. "If the people revolt, what then? What can they do then? No, my benefactor, now we have won, now we are on top, now they can no longer resist us. Never!"

Arseny Ivanovich wanted to convince Valabuyev that the Party was big and strong, but Valabuyev was silent and shook his round, shorn head slightly; from which it was impossible to gather whether he agreed or whether he kept from arguing out of politeness. Doctor Berg yawned, looked at his gold monogrammed watch, and interrupted Arseny Ivanovich with a touch of annoyance in his voice:

"The devil take it! It's half past twelve. Some one's always late. The eternal Russian tardiness."

Doctor Berg considered himself the most practical and consequently the most useful and most valuable

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member of the Party. In his opinion half the defeats of the revolution were due to the inherent laziness of Russian and Slav and to their inability, as he put it, to "write a simple business letter." He loved precision and prided himself upon the fact that he never forgot addresses, was never late at appointments and never mixed up "passwords." *"Les affaires sont les affaires,"* he always said, and he treated with contempt those comrades who "had busy airs on" and who "tempted danger." He was an old member of the Party, but had never been arrested. He had thin, white hands, wore high collars and coloured ties.

"So, my benefactor," Arseny Ivanovich resumed, stroking Valabuyev good-naturedly on his back, "I will tell you of a case. I remember, it was back in 1877—no, wait." He thought a moment. "No, not in seventy-seven, but in seventy-eight."

He had no time to finish his story. The heavy curtains parted and the door opened noiselessly. The man who entered was about twenty-six, very tall, with a black curly beard and heavily pock-marked face. He wore a blue peasant blouse of some rough material, and might have been taken for a clerk, or day-labourer, or for a young merchant of the Orthodox church, but not for a revolutionist. He was Gliebov, the legendary Volodya, who was renowned along the Volga for his desperate courage. Valabuyev glanced at the new guest and then left the room with eyes averted. Volodya made an awkward bow and sat down at the window, near the statue of the Venus of Milo. Arseny Ivanovich coughed:

"Well, shall we begin, benefactor?"

And in exactly the same way as a year ago, when dis-

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cussing the question of military revolt, they now began again in the full conviction that at least the beginning of the revolution, if not the outcome, depended upon their discussions. Bolotov listened, contemptuous, against his own will. Unaccustomed thoughts thronged into his mind. "Have they really not learned yet?" he thought, unconsciously using the discriminating "they" instead of "we." "Won't the example of David be sufficient? Don't they know that the right to talk about murder is given only to the man who himself commits the murder, and the right to talk about death is given only to the man who is himself ready to die, who has seen death?" He looked at Gliebov. He had heard him spoken of as a straightforward, courageous revolutionist, and he feared that he too might deliver long, futile speeches. But Volodya, with his black hairy head sunk on his breast and his eyes closed, seemed indifferent, almost asleep. Bolotov suddenly felt like saying aloud, so that everybody might hear him, the whole Party, every comrade, that these discussions were child's play and that nothing depended on them. He felt like saying that should an uprising materialize, it would be brought about by the will of those who would themselves carry the guns, by the will of those countless workmen who, without asking anybody's permission, would build barricades. But he remained silent. He felt that he would not be understood and that Doctor Berg would say those significant words to which he would not have the courage to reply. Doctor Berg would ask him in his cold manner: "Do you deny the influence of the Party, and if you do, why do you remain a member of it? If you do not, how can you treat its mandates with contempt?"

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Arseny Ivanovich was speaking with his usual authority and imperiousness:

"Why should we deceive ourselves? . . . Our forces are not united, but disorganized. . . . We have little ammunition. The army has not been on our side till now. The workmen are tired. To declare a strike now would mean . . . what would it mean, benefactors? . . . It would mean issuing a call to revolution, to an uprising of the whole people. . . . But are we ready for it? You'd better listen to me. I'm an old man. Rye bread is grandfather to the wheat roll. . . . We must wait a while. Last spring a man came to see us, what was his name? David? Or what? He kept gesticulating and shouting: a revolt. . . . The regiment is revolting! . . . And he didn't take our advice." Arseny Ivanovich looked reproachfully at Bolotov, whom he considered responsible for David's failure. "Well, what was the good of it? There was no revolt and they barely escaped with their lives. So my opinion is, let's wait. Better a small field than a large marsh. The time isn't ripe for revolts. . . . We must have patience. . . . Wait till spring. Then we'll see, but now—we mustn't, we mustn't, we mustn't."

Arseny Ivanovich spoke wisely and carefully. But to Bolotov it seemed that he was wrong, and his arguments concealed a lie that he could not, however, detect. He wanted to say something, but Volodya interceded. He rose slowly from his chair, as if he had been dreaming, looked over the whole company, smiled faintly at Doctor Berg's greenish-yellow tie, and addressing Arseny Ivanovich, he began in a loud voice and with a singing Moscow accent:

"You're talking nonsense, Arseny Ivanovich. . . .

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What have we assembled here for? Is it to weave the philosophical problem of the fate of the revolution? If so, then it would be best for us to take our leave of one another: the food is not for the horse. . . . I haven't come here for word battles. . . . The question is not whether it's advisable or not to declare a strike—we are not going to declare it anyway—but the question is this: if an uprising should start in St. Petersburg, or in Moscow, or anywhere else in Russia, what is the Party going to do? I ask you! What assistance can the Party offer? There has been one general strike already. Where were we? I say it's a disgrace!" Volodya was silent for a minute. "We must provide money, ammunition, men . . . and we must go ourselves . . . and not sit around in idleness." He finished resolutely and sat down.

At his last words Arseny Ivanovich began to drum on the table with his fingers. Vera Andreyevna blushed. Zalkind winked his inflamed eyes and looked at Volodya in indignant surprise.

"Then you mean to say, comrade," Doctor Berg remarked coldly, rubbing his white hands, "if I have understood you rightly, that the situation is this: if anybody, should anywhere, without asking the Party's permission, on his own initiative, build a barricade, we must come to his assistance? Have I understood you correctly?"

"Exactly," Volodya answered reluctantly and lighted a cigarette.

"Very well, we must give him our assistance, in other words exhaust the means of the Party? Is that it?"

"Exactly."

"And not only exhaust the means of the Party, but kill ourselves, besides?"

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"Yes, if necessary."

"Very well. That means, that should an uprising break out in Moscow tomorrow, we must go to Moscow?"

"You must go to Moscow."

"And relinquish all our business in St. Petersburg?"

"The devil, what business are you in anyway?" Volodya shouted suddenly and jumped up from his chair. "Tongue exercising? Arguing? Solving philosophical questions? In the devil's name, what other business can there be when there is an uprising?"

"Ah, youth, youth!" Arseny Ivanovich broke in in a conciliatory tone. "Both here and there. . . . You want an uprising . . . and you want speed . . . and by all means tomorrow and it's none of your concern who will untangle the mess. Wait till you're as old as I am, then you'll understand!"

"Of course, you know it all," Volodya answered with a smile. "You're our fathers. But I haven't come from Moscow for directions, I have come on business. Are you going to give us money? Yes or no? Will you give us ammunition? Yes or no? Have you got men? Yes or no?"

When Volodya, still flushed with anger, was on the carpeted marble stairs, and Valabuyev in his stylish vest and English coat was shaking his head, Bolotov, who had been silent all evening, came over to him irresolutely.

"Listen, Gliebov—"

"What is it?" Volodya flung out in annoyance, as he was going down the stairs.

"Wait, I'm going to Moscow with you."

Volodya stopped and looked at him suspiciously.

"You?"

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Bolotov felt hurt. Though he failed to notice the contempt in Volodya's words (he could not believe that anybody could despise him, so thoroughly was he convinced that his life was justified, important and full of sacrifices) yet he caught that in Volodya's eyes he was not the famous revolutionist Andrey Bolotov, a man beloved by the whole Party, deserving of respect and confidence, but a man whose courage and resoluteness were still to be proved. He wanted to become angry, but the other man's stern face was suddenly lighted by a smile.

"Very well! Tomorrow? Exactly. If you want to eat doughnuts, don't lie on the stove." Volodya laughed and banged the heavy oaken door.

They left together from the Nikolayev station, by the next train for Moscow.

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CHAPTER XI

"ANSWER me one question," said Bolotov, as the train started; "why were you surprised that I wanted to go to Moscow? Do you really think we are unfit for things that any member of your organization can do?"

Volodya did not answer immediately. He wrinkled his brow in thought, which made his face lose its usual sternness and become simple and kind, a plain Russian face.

"How shall I explain?" he began, as he took off his shabby cap and put it up on the rack. "True, I have very little faith in those who merely exercise their tongues. Still, of course, there are exceptions. But what irritates me most is this: if one can't keep pace, let him drop out; nobody's pulling him on a rope, so why all this talk? Let them hold their tongues, and not shout, 'We're going to do this and we're going to do that, and we're the salt of the earth, we're the intelligentzia, we're the Party, we're the Revolution, we'll remake the world.' . . . There was one like that, for instance,—I've read about him somewhere—so he just used to hack away in this style: 'We are the masterbuilders, the solenesses, we build lofty air castles on stone foundations.' How do you like that? That's what I call shameless. Why, when we get down to action, to real action, where will they be, those masterbuilders? You couldn't find them with a light in the daytime. And if anything has been achieved, it was not by them, not by

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those who issue decisions and publish red-tape circulars. It's all a fake. And a big one. I know, you cannot fool me, but the workman believes every word of theirs. . . . And they? Bah!"

Volodya, sincerely affected, waved an emphatic gesture and began to roll a cigarette with his heavy fingers.

"Just like Vanya and myself," flashed through Bolotov's mind, but the thought annoyed him. Isn't Arseny Ivanovich ready to give his life? Or Doctor Berg? Or Vera Andreyevna? Or Zalkind? Or he himself? In fact wasn't he now on his way to Moscow?

"Really, why am I going to Moscow?" he asked himself, but found no answer; and said frowning:

"Are you not ashamed to think that they—that we," he corrected himself, "are lying? If it should come to it, we would give our lives as freely as the others."

"A turtle travels but never arrives. You'd better explain this to me," Volodya answered quietly, blowing the smoke in rings. "I'm a poor philosopher and can't understand these quibbles of yours. But what I do see, I speak out. Does the Party recognize terror? Yes? And who throws bombs? You? Indeed, not. Not one of you has ever held a bomb in his hands. Does the Party preach revolt? Yes? And who is fighting on the barricades, in the army-barracks, on the battleships? You? No, not you. Not one of you has ever even smelt gunpowder. You heard how that German of yours, Berg, was frightened— Let all our affairs be in St. Petersburg! Ah, and oh, and ah, once more. . . . Always the same thing. 'Affairs of national importance' are for ever in the way. Why aren't they in my way? What *are* those affairs of national importance? If they really existed, very well, but it's

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all mere talk. You say 'if it should come to it.' Of course, I don't contradict, but how should it come to it if you sit behind seven bolts, spend your life in perpetual meetings, the devil take them? This is what I think, that if you're a member of the Party, which recognizes terror, you must be able to come out any moment with a bomb in your own hands. But what are the facts? Out of ten—what ten? Out of a hundred one goes, but where are the others? You'll say, propaganda, agitation, organization, and all sorts of things. Very well. But tell me, in the devil's name, what good is it to preach revolt when you yourself like a coward keep away? Just think—you write articles on terror, you harangue, you shout, but you yourself don't go in for terror, and yet you believe you're right. 'We're the leaders of the Party, we're its brains,' or, we have no 'special talents.' Special talents?—For what? For dying? What the devil does one have to have a special talent for dying for? Don't be a coward, don't be a coward, and once more, don't be a coward! That's all there is to it. It's disgusting to look on, by God! Some fourflusher in a high collar and a tie, like a peacock, sits and talks through his teeth—'taking into consideration'—'inasmuch as'—or writes circulars that nobody wants to read, or if they are read, they get thrown into the waste-basket. And he has his justifications: 'I'm not going in for terror because "division of labour" has been invented.' But where is justice? Plehve was killed, for instance. The plain people were wild with joy. That's their privilege. It's their lot either to dance with joy or to curse. They are no heroes, and we demand nothing of them. But how about the eagles? The Party? Why, the dear comrades, the hon-

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ourable members of the Party, on reading the telegram about Plehve's death, were intoxicated with joy. Each one of them ought to die of shame that it wasn't he who killed Plehve. He ought to be bursting with envy. But not a bit. We are terrorists, of course, in words only. So they took a drink, sang the Marseillaise, and that's all. Let the Sazonovs create terror, and we shall write books about terror, and have them printed across the frontier. Well, if we're caught, they will put us in the fortress for a year or send us to Siberia. That's all! Nothing to worry about. Bah!"

"What do you think we ought to do?"

"What you ought to do? Here's what. Every able-bodied one of you ought to take a gun and fight, and all the babies and weaklings, the cowards and talkers—in the neck. Then something would happen. Now there is no order. There is an all-Russian chancery, but nothing more. Agitation, propaganda—very well. But is this the time to exercise our tongues? There is a revolution on. You understand, the revolution is here. Not coming, but here, with us. It's not that we must get ready, but we must act! It's just as if the Germans would attack us and we should begin to teach the soldiers the A B C, instead of defending our fortress. You can't win a battle with books, but fists, not by whining and praying but by bombs, machine-guns and blood. Well, and now consider this: how many members are there in the Party? Say ten thousand. Throw your book into the fire, arm these men, let them go into battle. That's a force, isn't it? And every one of them talks about terror and barricades. But what are we doing? What? It's a disgrace. A hundred or two ready to go, and a hundred or two are going

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—without your permission. And you put your hands together and you urge them: go ahead, dear boys, fight and we'll sit home, drink tea, and discuss philosophical problems, or we'll call a conference, prepare some profound reports, deliver a few ringing speeches, and what's worst of all, nobody will know or see how shameful it all is. It's all very proper. It's just the thing. This is the truth. Why, they even talk of morality. Our morality, they say, is high, above the morality of the bourgeoisie. We are Socialists and so on. What a disgrace!"

As Volodya went on talking Bolotov began to feel an unpleasant dizziness and a choking sensation. The beloved, snow-white Party was becoming dirty, soiled, as if strange clutching fingers had passed over it. And as the night before in Valabuyev's house, he had felt like replying to Arseny Ivanovich, like shouting that his words were a lie, so now he was seized by a malicious feeling. "No, he's not right, he's not right," he kept on saying to himself, trying not to look at Volodya. "That's not true, no, it isn't."

"And what is most important of all," Volodya continued quietly, rolling another cigarette, "they bother us. If at least they'd lie on the oven and keep still. But no. They keep on butting in. They sentimentalize—don't do this, this is immoral, it's not permissible. They would like to make a revolution with kid gloves. They don't understand," he suddenly raised his voice to a shout, "that blood is always blood, no matter how you paint it, how you wash your hands. 'Less blood,' they say. But that's hypocrisy. We are not going to church: if you have no money, steal, or, as you say, 'expropriate.' I was on the Volga recently. My God, what's going on there! It's a pitiful sight. A man is

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in hiding from the hangman; if he's caught, it's all over with him, and he goes about without a passport, without boots on, without anything to eat for three days at a stretch. Well, what is he to do? If he robs a government store, steals some money, he's saved. So according to you, he mustn't, but if he does, he should see to it that there are no victims, and particularly no private victims! Why, of course! Do no harm to the bloated bourgeois, to the captains of industry, Mr. Pocketrob, or to the landowner, the benefactor of peasants, or to some General Debauché, or to spider Mr. Strangleall. Not allowed, God forbid! They're private people. That means—the man must hang. Nonsense!" He brought his fist down. "In war, no parlour methods, but war. What is there to be so nice about? They won't be nice to us. They'll take us by the neck and put the necktie on us in broad daylight, and we are trying to be good to ourselves and to them—to acquire capital—and preserve the innocence of a virgin. It's all silliness. You sit around like statues and nurse your holiness for thirty years, and in the meantime they beat you till you bleed. Be daring! Dare anything. Then you are a man. Worms!

"There are no problems, everything is permissible, you hear, everything. As long as we get what we're after, as long as we win out. With all those problems, with all that philosophy, with kid gloves, the devil take it, you won't get far. . . . Well, I've babbled a lot." Gliebov checked himself abruptly. "I don't take much stock in these talks—these intellectual talks. You mustn't blame me. Tomorrow we'll do business in Moscow, and we'll leave the discussion to the philosophers in stiff shirts, damn them! Good night."

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Volodya took off his coat, rolled it up for a pillow, turned to the wall, and fell asleep at once. It was stormy outside. Mingling with the noise of the wheels one could hear a faint pitiful wailing. Bolotov with his head bowed in his hands stared at the shabby covering of the seats and sighed. "Is Volodya right? No, of course not. It isn't true. Then what is?" He asked himself for the hundredth time. "Is every member of the Party bound to be under arms in time of a revolution? Yes, of course. That means that Arseny Ivanovich, and Doctor Berg, and I, and thousands of others like myself, are liars and cowards. But we are not liars. I'm no liar and coward. I know I'm no liar. I know I can be a soldier—yes, yes, yes—just an obscure soldier of the Party. I know that every one of us is ready to give his life. But mustn't the Party be managed? It must. Then Arseny Ivanovich and I and Vera Andreyevna and Doctor Berg are doing good and useful work. But what are we doing? Isn't it true that we are preaching murder, but are not killing ourselves? Isn't it true that we talk, talk, talk, but when it comes to action, we're not there? And does talk mean managing?" So Bolotov thought, rocking his body to and fro, in time to the motion of the train, feeling that he was losing himself in a maze. "But then Arseny Ivanovich and Doctor Berg and myself are liars, and we ought to be thrown out like useless rubbish, we ought to get a vagabond's passport."

"Your ticket, please," said a sleepy voice. A drowsy conductor with a lantern hanging from his belt punched the little yellow piece of cardboard and said, returning it:

"Going to Moscow? It's dangerous there."

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"Why?"

"Hope to God we get there. They say, it's not quiet in Moscow."

The train stopped. The doors opened, and the frosty air entered from the vestibule. The conductor's hat, coat and boots were covered with snow. The storm must have been at its height. Loud voices, distinct in the stillness of the night, came from the station platform. "Give the third bell." The locomotive whistled. The station lamps began to move past the train. Bolotov, without undressing, threw himself at length on the couch.

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CHAPTER XII

THREE men were standing at the gate of the two-story stone house of merchant Brizgalov in Dobraya Slobodka. Two were dressed in peasant costume, and the third, a pale, sickly-looking Jew, had on a light overcoat. About forty yards away from them a few young workmen, engaged in lively conversation, were busying themselves with a hack-drivers' sledge. Near them the street was littered with rubbish, rotting boards, a telegraph pole, a yellow chiffonier, a window frame and broad sheets of iron, which rang in the gusts of wind. The snow, which had fallen during the night and was untouched by traffic, sparkled in the sunlight. In the Church of the Resurrection at Barashy the chimes were ringing for the noon service.

One of the men dressed in a fur jacket was watching what was going on around the sledge curiously. He was rather short, with high cheekbones and narrow slit-like eyes, and his rough hands were callous from the cold.

"Look at the fun, Seriozha. By God, he can't unharness it," he said with a laugh.

"He'll unharness it," Seriozha said lazily.

"The driver is cursing. I'd better go and take a look," the first speaker replied after a pause, and walked slowly over to the group of shouting, cursing men.

"Well, comrades, what's wrong?" He raised his voice. "What?"

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The withered old driver, who wore a faded blue coat, was pulling at his scraggy horse. On seeing a new man coming up he let go the reins and began to stammer, bowing low, and with tears in his eyes.

"Oh, oh, oh, benefactor—excellency, please tell them to let me go. The horse isn't mine. So help me Christ, the horse belongs to my master, so does the sledge. The master will take it out of me. Oh, oh, oh! Show a little mercy for God's sake. Let me go."

"Shut up, you old radish! And what are you standing around for? Hey, comrade, it's you I mean!"

Five or six red-faced factory workers and a youngster in a fur coat were pointing laughingly to a lean gentleman with a pince-nez. This gentleman was making futile attempts to unfasten the harness. His thin, frozen fingers would not obey him and he only succeeded in making it still tighter. One of the onlookers covered his face with his sleeve and tried to stifle his laughter.

"You see, he was boasting he would unharness the horse."

"What a helpless creature! Hands like meat hooks," said the man in the fur jacket scornfully, as he removed the harness quickly and easily. "Well, now take the horse away."

The gentleman with the pince-nez took the reins awkwardly. The decrepit horse, breathing heavily, its head drooping, took two steps and stopped short, motionless as a statue. The driver, looking on intently at the disposition of his master's property, pulled off his cap and threw it vigorously into the snow:

"Go to it. It's all up with me. Take it, boys, take it. Take the horse, take the sledge. What's the use? It's your business. God help you! And the Holy

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Mother!" He turned to the gilded church spire which sparkled in the distance, and crossed himself with trembling hands.

"Vanya!" Seriozha called loudly.

"What?"

"Come here, Vanya."

"What for?"

"Somebody's coming along the Mashkov Lane."

Vanya let go the shafts and turned back to the gate, sinking in the soft snow as he went. After a whispered conversation with his comrades, he ran to the Mashkov Lane. Along the deserted sidewalk came two men. One of them he recognized by his black beard and his height to be Volodya. The other also looked familiar. He was tall and shaven and blue-eyed.

"My God, is it you, Vladimir Ivanovich? We've been waiting for you so impatiently." Vanya greeted them joyfully, trying to recollect where he had seen those blue eyes before.

Bolotov held out his hand.

"Don't you know me?"

"Pardon me. I can't recall." Vanya blushed in embarrassment.

"What are you doing, boys?" Volodya shouted merrily. "A barricade? That's good. They'll get theirs. Ah David, you here?" He nodded to the Jew.

David began to talk hurriedly.

"Yes, yes—a barricade, Vladimir Ivanovich. You know, in Paris, at the time of the commune— Ah, are you with us, too, Bolotov? How wonderful! Ah, you know, Vladimir Ivanovich? It's all so wonderful. We were fighting yesterday. Since last night we have had barricades in Moscow. It's revolution, Vladimir Ivan-

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ovich! And what's going on in St. Petersburg? Nothing? What do you mean? No uprising in St. Petersburg? Well, as I was saying, yesterday, you know, we repelled an attack not far from here in the Chistoprudny Park. You don't believe me? So help me God, we did. Ask Seriozha. And now I'm certain there'll be a constitutional assembly, there'll be a republic. What do you think, Andrey Nikolayevich? Eh?"

The "attack" of which David spoke had been the product of his imagination. He sincerely believed that a battle had taken place the day before and that he had emerged triumphant. But the fact was, that when the revolutionists, passers-by, storekeepers, drivers, messengers and tramps had built the first barricade in Moscow, and David, overwhelmed with joy, had raised the red banner over it, a detachment of Cossacks, six men in all, appeared on horses from Maroseyka Street. As soon as they noticed the barricades and the armed men, the Cossacks halted. They paused irresolutely for a moment, looking at one another and then suddenly turned around, as if at somebody's command, and rode hurriedly away making the feathery snow fly. Without knowing why, merely because he had a revolver in his hand, David sent several shots after them, but he did not kill or wound any one. He was offended because Volodya was listening to him unwillingly. He wanted to go on talking and tell Bolotov how he and Seriozha had gone bravely to the army barricades, how they had been shot at, how they and the soldier Gabayev had walked away, how Gabayev was later arrested in Odessa, and how they had gone to Finland, had found the famous Gliebov, and had become members of his

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fighting organization. But he saw Volodya's serious face and he sighed and kept quiet.

"Are you working?" Volodya asked the men who were building the barricades.

"Working, Vladimir Ivanovich!" exclaimed several voices. The youngster in a fur coat raised his face, red from the cold, thought a while, scratched his back and laughed. Volodya went over to the sleigh and, with a motion that looked surprisingly light for his big body, jokingly lifted it about a yard from the ground. As if testing his great strength he held the sleigh for a moment and then dropped it upon the rising barricade.

"So," he said with a broad smile.

Bolotov watched him with growing agitation. The deserted, snow-covered streets of Moscow, the shuttered windows, the barred shops and stores, the complete absence of policemen and Cossack patrols, and the barricade that was being built here on Chistiye Prudy Street made Bolotov feel that something of serious importance was happening in Russia, something that did not happen through his or any one else's individual will. He saw it was not the Party's authority that had upset Moscow, the rich, active, populous, peaceful city. Now the St. Petersburg conferences seemed insignificant and ridiculous. He tried to understand what hidden force was moving the people who had begun to build barricades on Lefortov, Kozhevniky, Miüsy, and Arbata Streets, in all parts of the city, and had resolved to risk their lives and to kill. But it was beyond him. As he stood there in the rays of the winter sun, on the white snow, among joyous, healthy, armed men, who were skilfully carrying out their unfamiliar, dangerous work, he felt

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happy and invigourated. All Moscow seemed to him to have risen as one man under the impulse of a Russian force, stored through the ages, and he was stirred by a sense of a new, heavy responsibility, not to the Party, not to Arseny Ivanovich, but to all Russia, which was shaken by the revolution. It also seemed to him that he was chosen to be the leader who would carry the rebelling people to victory. He turned to Vanya with a warm smile:

"How is it you have forgotten me so soon?"

"I had absolutely," Vanya smiled back. "Do you remember how you frightened me?"

"Frightened you?"

"Yes. I thought you were a spy."

Bolotov laughed. "So that's how he understands me. But what difference does it make? Is it important? No, the sun is important, the men, the barricades, and the fact that he and I are together at the barricades. Are we really at a barricade?" he asked himself wonderingly. "Yes, I am in Moscow. And there is an uprising in Moscow. There is an uprising in Russia. It's splendid. Everything is splendid," he murmured almost aloud, as if trying to convince himself that he was not asleep and everything was indeed splendid. Doctor Berg suddenly came to his mind. "Oh, well, let him solve his own problems there," he thought without any ill will.

"Look here, boys," Volodya said, "the barricades are finished. What's the use of wasting our time any longer? You, Vasily Grigoryevich, keep watch here, at our fortress." He turned to the man with the pince-nez. The man all this time had been watching Volodya with loving, admiring eyes. "And we'll go into Brizgalov's

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yard. Who are you?" he said, turning to the youngster in the fur jacket.

"I?"

"Yes, you. Where have you come from?"

"I? I'm Brizgalov's porter."

"What are you doing here?" Volodya frowned.

"Please, your excellency," the porter stammered, removing his cap, "it's very interesting."

"Interesting?"

"Yes."

"Well, the devil take you, stay here and keep watch."

Volodya opened the gate and entered the yard.

The narrow birch-lined yard had a neglected look. The naked branches of the trees and the paths and the lawn were covered with the silvery snow. It looked like a beautiful carpet even more chastely pure than the pavements outside.

When all were assembled, Volodya said;

"Listen, boys, God owns the bold ones, while the devil swings the drunks. A barricade is a good thing, but we are not going to win Moscow by standing around. We need not wait till the officials come, we must call on them. What do you think, Seriozha?"

"What I think? There's nothing to think," Seriozha answered, lighting a cigarette. "We must make terror."

"How? How? What do you mean? How make terror?" David broke in hurriedly.

"How?" Volodya frowned again.

"Well, that's a minor matter. We'll see later how to go about it. Have we all got revolvers? All right. Are you with us, Bolotov?"

Though Bolotov did not know whither he was being

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invited by Volodya and though he could not tell what it meant to make terror in revolutionary Moscow, still he accepted the invitation unhesitatingly. He had lost control over himself, he felt, and was an obedient servant to Volodya. Some higher immutable will, mastering alike Volodya, and David, and Seriozha, and himself, was forcing him to something terrible, and it was not in his power to refuse to submit to that will. The sense of not belonging to himself, but of being a plaything in some one else's hands, was disagreeable to him.

The winter sky was darkening. The snow crunched beneath their feet as they came out into the Chistoprudny Park. They walked by twos, and because they were many and all armed, with Volodya leading, and around them immense, dark, silent Moscow which had risen for mortal combat, Bolotov had a stimulating sensation of unspent strength and of approaching blessed victory.

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CHAPTER XIII

IT was six o'clock in the morning and still dark when Volodya stopped at the entrance to a small wooden house on Gruziny Street. "Here," he whispered, and finding the button of the electric bell, he pressed it with a long, lingering ring. His comrades, cross and sleepy, indistinguishable in the darkness, stood close together. The air was frosty and the bluish-dark December sky starry above their heads. The Big Dipper hung up there resplendent. "Why am I here, with them?" Bolotov thought in sudden alarm. He was no longer experiencing that radiant feeling which had possessed him the day before. It even seemed to him that Volodya was doing something unnecessary, wicked, harmful. But he did not have the will-power to leave. Behind the glass door, in the hall, a light appeared, and a stout porter, barefoot, in a long, soiled dressing-gown rattled a bunch of keys.

"Who's there?" he grumbled, opening the door carefully and gathering the gown about him. Through the lighted window-panes, Bolotov clearly saw nearsighted eyes searching in the darkness, a swollen sleepy face, and dishevelled hair. He heard Vanya behind him saying in a low voice:

"God sends a visitor to the one he loves!"

"Are you deaf? Open up!" Volodya shouted, and one of the revolutionists, Konstantin, a red, freckled youngster of about nineteen, pushed the door with his

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shoulder. The door gave way and the glass broke with a crash. The porter raised his hand. But Konstantin gave the man no opportunity to cry out. He threw his whole weight upon him and seized him by the throat. Bolotov saw the porter's white scared face turn blue and swollen.

"Bind him!" Volodya ordered abruptly. "Konstantin and Roman Aleksieyevich, remain here. Povarenkov and Leizer—in the street. Don't admit anybody! You understand? Nobody! Whoever rings—bind him!"

Stooping his great lithe body and trying not to make any noise with his boots, he ran up the stairs with easy youthful steps. On the second floor, to the right, there was a shield on the door: Yevgeny Pavlovich Sliozkin. Volodya turned to his party:

"Look here," he said in a half-whisper, "you, Vanya, you go to the kitchen and station yourself at the back entrance. And, take care, you raven, or I'll get you!"

Without awaiting an answer, he rang the bell. All was silent. In the stillness the breathing of many people was audible. Bolotov was quite certain now that they were doing something frightful and cruel. Again he felt like leaving so as not to see what was about to take place. But the same familiar force that had make him happy the day before retained him now; and the consciousness that he did not belong to himself, that he was subordinate to somebody else's will, that he was a mute, obedient soldier, was not only unpleasant, but even shamed and frightened him. Not David, it seemed, nor Volodya, nor Vanya had decided to attack this locked house in the night like thieves, but the terror organization, the Party, Moscow, all Russia. They had no right

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to hold back, a retreat would be a grave disgrace, unpardonable treachery. He realized he would not leave, but would unhesitatingly, without protest, do everything Volodya might order him to do.

David, who was already shivering in the street, as though in a fever, looked at him slantingly and sighed:

"They won't open the door? Eh?"

Bolotov shrugged his shoulders nervously. Downstairs in the porter's room all became silent, and the lights went out. Volodya rang again. The bell sounded harshly in the hall.

"Whom do you want?" an old woman's voice asked from behind the door.

"From the general!" Volodya answered immediately.

"From the general?"

"Yes, yes. Very important. Open the door quick!"

The key creaked in the lock. The door opened, and there stood an old woman, a nurse, probably, shrivelled and unkempt, in a white nightgown. She raised her head trustingly, when she saw the crowd of armed men, she crossed herself, and opened her old toothless mouth and bowed and swung her thin braid, and moved backwards from Volodya.

Volodya entered, bringing in a smell of the frost, with icicles on his beard and brows. He hesitated a moment and pushed the closed door lightly. The door led into a dark, stuffy room, evidently the living-room. He searched the wall with his fingers and switched on the electric light. Bolotov, moved by the same inexplicable force, followed him in.

A heavy writing-table stood in the centre of the room. In the right corner, under a simple image, on a broad leather couch, a man was sleeping. He seemed to be

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about forty years old. He had black hair, sprinkled with grey, and black moustachios curling up at the ends. He must have heard the steps in his sleep, or perhaps the brightness of the light disturbed him. He opened his eyes lazily and closed them again, as if he did not believe what he saw, or thought he was still dreaming. But in another instant, as if somebody had struck him on the head, he threw off the cotton quilt with a quick motion and shoved his hand under the pillow. Volodya seized him by the shoulder.

"I'll ask you to get up."

The man looked silently at Volodya with darkened, frightened, wicked eyes and tried to free his arm. He did not see that Vasily Grigoryevich was aiming his revolver at him and that right at his very ear, David was also holding his shaking revolver to his head.

"Mister Sliozkin?" Volodya asked.

"Yes, Sliozkin," answered the man haltingly, in a deep baritone, feeling he could not free himself.

"Colonel of gendarmes, Yevgeny Pavlovich Sliozkin?"

"Yes, Yevgeny Pavlovich Sliozkin. Let go my hand."

Colonel Sliozkin put one of his bare hairy feet on to the rug. He thought a while and put his other foot down. Sitting like that on the couch, with his bare legs hanging down and with nothing but a short shirt on, he asked in a voice husky but loud:

"What do you wish?"

"You'll find out at the proper time."

Sliozkin began to dress. It was all like a dream to Bolotov. It was so strange to see those bare legs, that bare red neck with its protruding Adam's apple, that middle-aged man, probably married and with a family,

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dressing and surrounded by unknown, hostile people. "Exactly like gendarmes," Bolotov thought. Sliozkin could not put on his high patent-leather boots without his servant's help, and everybody stood there in awkward silence while he fumbled with them, trying to pull them on and making the spurs click together and beating the floor with his heels. At last he got on his blue trousers and boots, and sat down on the couch again and shrugged his shoulders boyishly. Spreading his hands helplessly, he sighed:

"What does it all mean?"

"Where's your revolver?" Volodya asked severely.

"Revolver?" Sliozkin passed his hand over his forehead. "The revolver is under the pillow."

"Take a seat at the table."

Sliozkin did not move.

"I want you to sit at the table."

"At the table? At the table? No, no, I don't want to sit at the table," he murmured in a hardly audible voice, following Volodya with his eyes.

"Mr. Sliozkin."

"No, no! For God's sake, no, I won't sit at the table."

Bolotov saw David put his revolver to Sliozkin's temple. He saw David's fingers tremble and red spots appear on Sliozkin's nose and cheeks and his jaw tremble. David, without taking his revolver away, began to talk rapidly, stammering and swallowing his words:

"What do you mean? If you're told to—I mean ordered, then you must sit down, when you're told to—I mean ordered."

Volodya made a grimace.

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"Mr. Sliozkin."

Sliozkin got up and moving with an effort sat down in a low, wicker armchair. As he sat at the familiar writing-table, with his back to the door, and saw the familiar objects in their accepted places, always the same places, the black morocco portfolios, the ink-bottle, the paper-weight in the shape of a horse-shoe, he suddenly grew quiet and said, trying to be firm:

"Well, what do you wish?"

"You'll find out at the proper time."

Volodya moved David's revolver away.

"Look here, Colonel Yevgeny Pavlovich Sliozkin, I give you five minutes' time."

Volodya did not finish. Sliozkin looked at him a minute with wide-open eyes, and suddenly, without taking his eyes off Volodya's face, he rose slowly from the chair and began to move backwards to the door. He was tall, straight, and white as a sheet. As he moved, he slowly raised his hands as if begging for mercy; and when he had raised them to the level of his shoulders, he covered his face with them, spreading his thick fingers. Then Bolotov heard something that he could not forget for long afterward. The memory of it disturbed many a night and woke him up in a cold sweat. He heard a broken, wailing sound. It was impossible to believe that those whining noises, so unlike a man's voice, were coming from the throat of this strong, middle-aged man in blue trousers and white shirt. Sliozkin with his fingers on his face and his eyes still fixed on Volodya continued to step backward with the same continuous whine, towards the corner, as if there lay safety. Bolotov turned away.

But suddenly another unexpected sound came from

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the hall, and filled the low rooms, muffling the whine. It was the shrill, heart-breaking cry of a woman, who pushed past the men and threw herself upon them. She was stout, but had a sickly complexion, and she must have just got out of bed, for her hair was in curling-papers. She did not seem to understand what she was doing. She only knew that her husband was to die; and with a continuous cry she threw herself on her knees, and clasped Volodya's legs, then Seriozha's, and then Bolotov's and kissed their boots. And while kissing and choking with tears, she repeated one meaningless word:

"Help! Help! Help!"

Bolotov saw Vasily Grigoryevich bury his face in the window curtain and David throw his revolver away and run out with his face in his hands. Volodya, pale with anger, went up to the woman resolutely. He picked her up like a child and began to mutter glumly:

"Calm yourself, madam, calm yourself."

The woman continued to wail. Her soft fat body in a long nightgown trembled. Freeing herself from Volodya's firm hold, she kept on uttering the same despairing cry, as if she had forgotten all other words:

"Help! Help! Help! Help!"

Bolotov could not remain silent any longer and was on the verge of bursting into a sob. Fearing to show tears, he turned to Volodya:

"Spare him!"

Volodya did not answer. Holding the woman fast in his arms and stopping her mouth with a handkerchief, he stepped out into the hall rapidly and firmly.

"They let her get by!" he said between his teeth. "Ravens!"

Sliozkin was now standing in the left corner, near the

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door, speechless and motionless, with his back pressed against the wall. He kept his dry, brilliant, unnaturally wide-open eyes on Volodya uneasily, without missing a single step of his, a single motion of his big hands. Volodya returned, locked the door, looked at him with a fixed attentive gaze, and said in a loud, clear voice:

"Well, Mister Sliozkin, by the decision of the Moscow terrorist organization you have been sentenced to death by hanging." He added in a lower voice: "Hey, whoa, there! A rope here!"

No one moved. Volodya frowned. Bolotov, feeling his legs were trembling beneath his knees, came over to him again:

"Vladimir Ivanovich!"

"What is it?"

"Vladimir Ivanovich!"

"Well?"

"Spare him, Vladimir Ivanovich."

"What! The colonel of gendarmes, Sliozkin? Spare him? Ah, you! Then what was all this child's play for? What for? Faugh!"

"Spare him, Vladimir Ivanovich."

Sliozkin did not move, as if Bolotov were not pleading for him. He kept his eyes fixed on Volodya. Volodya's face twitched. Under the heavy black beard, his right cheek, near his tight-set lips, began to tremble convulsively, and without looking at Bolotov, he shouted hoarsely:

"Go to the devil! All of you!"

Bolotov left the room, without being conscious of what he was doing. The hall was empty, save for a workingman at the entrance door, whom Bolotov did not know. He stood on watch with an expressionless face, a revolver

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in his hand. When Bolotov caught the indifferent, almost bored look in the man's eyes, he felt stifled, and was certain now that Sliozkin would surely be killed, and no power could save his life. "They won't be nice to us, they'll take us in broad daylight." He suddenly recalled Volodya's words. "And, really, what *was* all the child's play for? Sliozkin is a scoundrel; he has had dozens of people hanged, he has no conscience, he's like a beast," Bolotov thought in an attempt at justification, though that was as far as he could go. Somebody was sobbing in a corner. It was David, by the hall-rack, half-hidden by a gendarme's uniform. The workman on watch looked at him, his lips curling in contempt.

In Sliozkin's room only Seriozha and Volodya were left. When Bolotov had gone out, he had touched Volodya's arm and said softly:

"Leave him alone, Vladimir Ivanovich."

Volodya was lost in thought. With head bent and legs stretched wide apart he thought a moment. Seriozha closed his eyes. Suddenly Volodya raised his head:

"Cowards! They're all cowards!" he muttered and, trying to avoid Sliozkin's gaze, with a quick motion, he pulled out his small revolver and, setting his teeth, almost without taking aim, he sent a shot into the corner. The room filled with smoke. On the rug against the wall, with his head thrown back, lay Sliozkin mortally wounded.

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CHAPTER XIV

DAY had already dawned when David came out into the street. It was miserable weather. Dark clouds were hanging low over the city, over the white roofs and bare factory chimneys. The snow was not crisp, but fell in wet flakes and clung damp to one's clothes. Head down, shrinking into his light overcoat, David walked rapidly and aimlessly along the park towards Zamoskvoriechie Street. The Raush Quay was deserted, as if all Moscow had died out. On the other side of the river, beyond the Kamenny Bridge, the spires of the Kremlin showed dimly through the falling snow. After the sleepless night in the hall in the gendarme's house, after the sobs, cries and haste, after the orders of Volodya, this lazy stillness seemed new and unexpectedly strange. And so did the wet snow, which fell on his cold neck, and the lowering sky, and the dim cupola of Christ the Saviour. But strangest and most unexpected of all was the indifference of passers-by. Nobody knew, and perhaps nobody cared to know, that something terrible had happened, that a man had been killed, Yevgeny Pavlovich Sliozkin, and that he had been killed by him, by David.

On Balchuga Street, near the only shop whose doors were open, some trucks stood carrying flour, covered with matting and stretching across the whole street. The well-fed horses, heavy draught animals, stood in the deep snow, the drivers nearby, their heads down like the horses, just as frozen and snow-laden, waiting for the

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next one to pass into the yard. One of the trucks had got stuck at the gates, and the shop clerks in linen aprons were pushing it, cursing as they worked. On the dirty, trodden threshold stood the red-bearded proprietor, also cursing as he looked at the clerks. David stopped in front of the shop, and observed with mechanical curiosity the monotonous row of loaded trucks, the snow-covered men, the cursing red-bearded merchant, as if it were really important for him to know when the sledge would be pushed into the yard. And even after the sleigh at length disappeared creaking beyond the gates and the whole train of wagons started after it, and the clerks re-entered the shop, David remained standing motionless for some time, gazing in the same mechanical way at the deserted street and the iron locks on the shops. The cold brought him to himself. His face was wet, his hands red, stiff, aching intolerably from the frost. He thrust them deep into his pockets, put up his coat collar, and crossed the Kamenny Bridge rapidly. On Volkhonka Street, he stumbled on a barrel covered with snow—it was part of a complete ice-covered barricade, left by a terrorist band—and he nearly fell over it. Rubbing his hurt knee, he turned into a side street, but around the corner he saw another barricade and a red banner fluttering over it. Somebody from behind the barricade called him.

David glanced at the flag and, with a wave of his hand, turned on his heels and walked back to the Borovichy Gates. A young terrorist, the light of battle in his eyes, with a driver's belt on, ran after and overtook him. His breath was on David's cheek, he looked straight into his face. David stopped and flushed and began to stammer, his eyes full of tears:

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"What do you want? Last night—the head of the gendarme force—was killed—"

Feeling that he was beginning to sob and making an effort to restrain himself, he shouted in a shrill falsetto:

"And I killed him!"

Then he took off his student's cap and ran off to the Kremlin without looking back. The young workman shrugged his shoulders in perplexity, spit, and went slowly back to the barricade.

The snow still laid a sheet over the world. All the walks in Alexsandrovsky Park were covered with a white carpet. David sat down on a bench and with the same mechanical curiosity with which he had looked at the trucks he regarded the flying snowflakes. They fell silently on his shoulders, hands and knees and when they made a big heap, he would brush them off carefully with one finger. He was unaware of how long he remained there. He felt cold. A great while passed. He thought of nothing, neither of Sliozkin, nor of the uprising, nor of Volodya. He saw the snowflakes, the stone wall of the Kremlin, and counted the strokes of the clock on the Tainitzky Tower in feverish self-oblivion. But suddenly with the same merciless dreaminess as the night before, he heard the shrill wail, the very wail. Though he had actually heard it, he could not believe in it. "A-a-a-a!" he bellowed and raised his hands to his head. "A-a-a-a-a!" he cried again and again, pressing his temples till they ached. His cap fell into the snow. He did not pick it up. He could clearly see the darkened, unblinking, wide-opened eyes. He got up, with his head in his hands, his wet coat unbuttoned and wandered on hatless to Arbatsky Plaza. On the plaza were scattered the remains of a barricade. A bonfire was crackling in

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one corner, and men in dark uniforms were warming themselves about it. There were many of them, and David was feeling cold again. Without grasping the situation he advanced straight towards the fire.

"Who goes there?" he heard a hoarse cry. He did not understand and simply quickened his pace; but something sharp and hard stood in his way. A soldier of slight build, with a hood over his ears and in awkward-looking, snow-covered boots, confronted him. He held his rifle in a menacing position, looked at David closely, straightened up as though on parade, and said in a monotonous tone:

"I caught a Jew, your excellency."

A few men, dressed in the same kind of hoods and in grey uniforms, surrounded David. They all had rifles in their hands and all looked at him with open antagonism. A young officer, with a pale frowning countenance and a birthmark on his cheek, came up and also looked David over from head to foot in a hostile manner. The soldier repeated gaily:

"A Jew, your excellency."

"Search him!" said the officer with a grimace of disgust.

David felt strange, coarse hands begin to grope over his body, his back and chest and under his arm-pits. Their touch made him colder. He huddled and hid his face in his collar.

"A revolver, your excellency."

David was not conscious of what was going on. He could still hear the hare's wail, and it interfered with his thoughts. But somehow he was convinced that the search was a misunderstanding, and the misunderstanding would be cleared up and he would be released. He

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could not believe that he, David, who had just now been a free man, who could walk freely about Moscow and go freely to St. Petersburg or across the border, should be suddenly detained by unknown men here, on Arbata Street, and these men should have the right to do with him as they pleased. It was so absurd and unthinkable that he felt no fear or apprehension and watched the hands searching his body indifferently. One of the soldiers, of a minor rank, with black moustachios, pushed him slightly with the butt-end of his gun:

"Well, move along! March!"

Four armed men with expressionless faces, like the terrorist's who had kept watch in Sliozkin's hall, led him along Arbata Street. He followed obediently, swinging his arms as usual. Suddenly he noticed he had lost his hat. His flaxen hair was getting wet. It occurred to him he might easily catch cold and strained his weakened memory in vain to recall where he had lost it. It was not until the soldiers stopped near a dirty-looking government building in an unfamiliar alley that he realized he was being taken to a police station. At the door of the first room, which was cold and had the smell of barracks about it, stood two sentries; and an old police-inspector with silver medals on his chest lay dozing on a bench. While he went to make his report, David looked idly about the room. A black pool of melting snow was forming at his feet.

The inspector returned in a minute. Again somebody pushed David along by the shoulder. In a big light room with white-washed windows, at an official red table, under a portrait of the Czar, sat two officers in the uniforms of the Hussars. One of them, an old wrinkled colonel with long grey moustachios, was writing. The

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other, somewhat younger, with the shoulder knots of an adjutant, was looking over some pink papers. David stood near the door with the inspector at his side. The room was warm. To the left a fir log was burning in the stove, and to his pleasure he felt his wet, numbed fingers beginning to thaw out. A long time passed before the colonel raised his head and looked at him, his eyes blinking wearily. The adjutant bent over respectfully and whispered something in his ears.

"Yes, yes,—of course, of course," said the colonel, without looking at the adjutant. Turning to David he asked sternly in a commanding bass voice:

"Is that your revolver?"

David did not answer.

"Did you shoot with it?" said the colonel and laid his white hand with rings on the revolver. "Your name. Answer when you're spoken to."

But David could not have answered even had he wished to. Suddenly with merciless certainty, with that unshakable sureness which admits of no doubt, he realized he would not be released, and his being there was due to no misunderstanding. To the colonel, to the adjutant, to the soldier who had arrested him, to the police-inspector who had been sleeping so peacefully on the bench, to those naked barrack-walls, he felt he was not a living man, not David Cohn, with his beautiful, immortal soul, but a soulless number, a nobody, one of those nameless persons who were being arrested and hanged or exiled to Siberia by the dozens. The colonel, he now fully realized, could not understand, would not care about it if he could, that it was not David's fault that Moscow was in revolt, and there was fighting on the barricades and Gendarme Sliozkin had been killed. He

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foresaw he should be tried and sentenced on the basis of the coincidence—of lying and insignificant trifles. He recalled that he had fired shots on Miasnitzka Street and it was impossible to conceal it, because the revolver was blackened and five bullets were missing. The next second his whole weak, numbed, tired body awoke to the comprehension that soon, in a few moments, something terrible would take place in that police station, something that had never happened to him before, that ought not, should not happen, that would be even more terrible than the wail and the death of Sliozkin. An uncontrollable trembling shook him now and grew more violent from moment to moment. He tried to check it, but his teeth would not obey his will and chattered violently, his jaw trembled and his fingers quivered on his breast. The adjutant leaned over to the colonel again, the colonel again looked at David, and motioned silently.

David had only a confused idea of what happened after that. All he was anxious about now was to stop that disgusting, cowardly trembling. As if in a dream, he saw he was in the hall again and realized he was being taken out into the yard. He saw the snowflakes, the grey uniforms, the cracked yellow wall and the shaven face of the adjutant. Something dry and hot stuck in his throat. He swayed, but somebody supported him carefully. He came to himself when he stood at the wall with his hands tied. About ten yards in front of him he could see a dark indistinguishable mass. He knew it was made up of soldiers. To their right stood the officer stooping. And as in a lightning flash it came to David that the snow, the rifles, the patch of grey sky, the shaven adjutant with the stern face, all that was the unknown thing called death of which he

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had been afraid his whole life. The trembling stopped at once. He raised his head, but lowered it again immediately. The snow tickled his cheeks and fell into his eyes. He saw nothing more. A yellowish flame leapt out. On the spot where David had just stood against the wall a pitiful, shrivelled superfluous body lay huddled up helplessly. The snow fell unceasingly.

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CHAPTER XV

FOR many days fighting had been going on in the streets of Moscow, and the issue was doubtful. Neither of the opposing armies—neither the government nor the revolutionists—dared to make direct attack in the open. Those few hundred Moscow workmen, clerks and students who had been erecting barricades, were not strong enough to take the Kremlin, nor to force the army to lay down their arms. On the other hand the few regiments whom the Government could trust were quelling the uprising slowly and unwillingly, as if they were performing some necessary but burdensome duty. The industrial and business part of Moscow, the Moscow of the bourse, the banks, the warehouses and shops, the million-peopled city of merchants and priests, took no part in the struggle. It was waiting in suspense to see which side would win and thus gain authority. The soldiers kept on destroying and burning the barricades abandoned by the terrorists; but when the shooting began again they would return in disorder to their barracks. In the place of the barricades that were destroyed, the terrorists would set up new ones and then abandon them light-heartedly when they saw that their forces were outnumbered. Towards the end of the week rumours spread over Moscow that the Czar's guard was coming from St. Petersburg over the Nikolayevsky railway, which had not been affected by the strike. The isolated, impotent, irresolute uprising,

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it was now clear, would come to an end as suddenly as it had started.

But neither the terrorists, who were giving up their lives at the barricades, nor the officials and merchants who were hiding in fear, nor those ministers who were dispatching the Semyonov regiment, nor the members of the regiment themselves, foresaw this end. All Moscow, all Russia, it seemed to them, was up in arms, and only by the extremest measures, and at the cost of numberless victims could the raging conflagration, the great victorious Russian revolution, be extinguished.

Bolotov thought so too. He had been fighting unceasingly for two weeks. Not attacking, but on the other hand not making any attempt to avoid skirmishes with the army, Volodya's squad was slowly circling the city along Sadovaya Street, from Chistiye Prudy Street, across Srietenka, Drachevka and Samoteka Streets, towards Priesna Street. The squad was naturally giving way, as a beast does before a hunter, before the strong soldiery, towards that part of Moscow which was entirely in the hands of the revolutionists. Abandoned barricades that had been demolished by the Cossacks were immediately built up again by the others. The squad kept moving about Moscow without any preconceived plan, now drawing near to the Kremlin and giving battle at the walls of the Strastny Monastery, now receding into the remotest parts of the city. The number of terrorists had grown during these days; but it was not that spontaneous, powerful growth which signifies a popular revolution. Volodya had now about thirty men, almost all of them factory workers. Among this armed mob was Brizgalov's porter, Pronka, who had joined them on the first day of the upris-

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ing. This Pronka, a lively chap with a broad face and enormous hairy paws, hardly understood who was fighting and why. Had Bolotov spoken to him about a republic, about a constitutional assembly or Socialism, he would have scratched his head and answered with a silly smile that it was not his affair, but the affair of the aristocracy and they ought to know what was good. But as soon as he joined the terrorists he could not leave them again. He saw they were killing government officials, and since all officials, from the minister down to the policeman, were treacherous, unnatural creatures, he decided they were doing a good, useful thing. Besides, it was so unusual, hence so entertaining—"amusing," as he said—to walk about the deserted streets of Moscow with a revolver, tear down fences, upset trolley cars, chop down posts and trees, hunt Cossacks and bring terror with his long-bored revolver to the weak-hearted wives of the merchants of Khamovnik, Lefortov and Pliushchikh Streets. In the beginning the terrorists looked at him distrustfully, as at a stranger, a carnal man. But once Pronka, by order of Volodya, undertook to slip by the army lines to Tverskaya Street and succeeded in getting and bringing back five hundred rubles from the committee; and after that he came to be considered a comrade, a full-fledged member of the organization.

When the rumour spread that the guard had been sent from St. Petersburg to Moscow, none but Volodya understood the full import of the situation. He grasped that the uprising would be crushed, the Semyonov regiment would sweep the unstable timid barricades before them without the slightest difficulty; and the cheap victory would be a mortal blow to the revolution. So he de-

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cided at any cost to prevent the Semyonov regiment from coming to Moscow. The only way to do this, he resolved, was to dynamite the railroad tracks. Without asking anybody's permission or advice he left for Tver with that in view, resigning the command of his body of men to Seriozha, not to Bolotov.

During that one week the change in Bolotov was so great that Arseny Ivanovich would surely not have recognized him. He had grown thinner, his blue eyes had shrunk, and his cheeks, pale and unwashed, were covered with a rough, heavy beard. The smart winter coat in which he had come from St. Petersburg had been torn to pieces the very first day, when he had had to break down Brizgalov's fence, carry empty barrels on his back, and cut telephone wires. As it also felt heavy and uncomfortable he discarded it. He put on, instead, a jacket with a sash, and exchanged his shoes for felt boots. For the first time in his life he knew, not from talk or books, what an uprising, barricades, murder, death meant. To his surprise he saw it was all much simpler, plainer, easier than the novels made it appear to be. But it was also far more terrible. For the first time also he experienced what are usually termed privations and what had always seemed oppressive and unbearable to him. He got at first hand an idea of what it means to go without food for two whole days, without a bath, to sleep in one's clothes somewhere in a cold, uninhabitable shed. But the unfamiliar sensations of cold, hunger, and uncleanliness of body did not embarrass him. On the contrary it was agreeable. With childish pride he looked at his cut, calloused hands, happy in the thought that he was like the rest of them, like Vanya, Konstantin, or Pronka, and he could per-

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form any labour, no matter how common—chop wood, fetch water for the barricades in the frosty weather or fan to life a fire going out in the wind. It delighted him that the men were gradually becoming accustomed to him and ceased to look upon him as a gentleman, a member of the mysterious committee, a possessor of white hands, which knew nothing of labour. He tried to strengthen this comradeship, not the artificial comradeship of a propagandist with his disciples, nor the superficial, meaningless attachment that is born of a secret perusal of pamphlets and talks on "the condition of the working class," "autocracy," or the *"Erfurter Programm."* In workingmen's circles, among half illiterate factory hands, he had always felt himself to be an intruder, an unwanted pedant, not a comrade or friend. But here, at the Moscow barricades, where all did their share of hard labour alike, where all were freezing alike, hungry and exposed to danger alike, the insulting borderline was wiping itself out. Unknown to himself Bolotov had become an inseparable part of the workingmen's troop, as valuable as any other member.

In the first naïve days of the barricade he had believed sincerely that the time would come when he, the experienced revolutionist, would lead the people. But as the uprising grew, his dreams of self-reliance turned more and more insignificant. He came to see that there was no government in Moscow; and should Volodya die, the barricades would not be abandoned, nor would the bitter civil war that Volodya had proclaimed end abruptly. He came to see that to "lead the people" was ridiculous and unnecessary, a fit subject for discussion in committees, but here, where streets were full of fighting, such thoughts were futile and meaningless. No

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words, he now realized with full force, could make people kill if they did not want to kill and no authority could prevent a man, once his mind was made up, from sacrificing his life. Three of the troopers attracted him. Vasily Grigoryevich, a pharmacist whom he pitied for his narrow shoulders, weak arms, the earthly pallor of his sunken cheeks and his impersonal obedience, not only to Volodya, but to every one of the comrades, even Pronka. The locksmith Konstantin, a lad of nineteen, freckled and curly-haired, who surprised him by his bold, truly Russian audacity, and Roman Aleksieyevich, a middle-aged man who spoke and shot very seldom but when he did shoot, placed his bullets where not one was lost. Pronka annoyed him because he could not shoot. In a retreat Roman Aleksieyevich was sure to be the last to leave the barricade, and, no matter how strong the fire, he never forgot to take the flag along.

Bolotov could not have explained why he had not left Volodya after the killing of Sliozkin, but he knew he had acted wisely, and it would have been mean and wrong in him to leave the fighting squad. That same affinity of blood which he had felt at the first barricade, binding him not only to Volodya but to all revolutionary Moscow, that force which had brought him to Sliozkin's house, that feeling of responsibility which had possessed him that night, all prompted him to remain, yet he could not explain his own resolve, or penetrate its hidden motive.

On Saturday, December the ninth, the men under Seriozha's command abandoned the barricades on Miüsy Street, retreated beyond the Presnensky Ponds and occupied the Deep Upper and Lower Predtechensky Alleys. They built several small barricades across Prudovaya and

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Presnenskaya Streets. Their right wing was at the observatory, their left at the Church of Johann Predtecha. In the rear they fortified a two-story school-house, barricaded all the windows and doors and posted sentries. The barricades they had abandoned on Miüsy Street were immediately occupied by a neighbouring band of students from the Institute and the University. Sounds of occasional revolver shots came from that direction.

"Gee, the gentlemen students are firing away!" Pronka winked with one eye and laughed.

"Look out! You're endangering your own comrades the way you're waving your pitchfork," said Konstantin sternly, climbing up the barricades and fastening the red banner, which waved and fluttered in the wind.

The day was cold and cloudy. The snow rose in a dry powder. Konstantin jumped about on the barricade a while, then went off a way and looked at the steep, slippery, ice-coated bulwark and said proudly:

"Fine! A frog is not afraid of the cannons."

About fifty paces behind the barricades, almost at the entrance to the school-house, the men had made a bonfire. None but the sentries remained at the barricades. Pronka walked lazily along the bulwark, halting every few minutes to cast a look of envy at the crackling fire. But suddenly he became all attention, turned his face to Prudovaya Street, stood still a few seconds, and then shouted gleefully:

"The little Cossacks are coming!"

Bolotov had become accustomed to false alarms, yet he jumped up and ran to the barricades, taking out his loaded revolver as he ran. Pronka was down on the ground already, standing on tiptoe and holding on to the

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bulwark with one hand, with the other pointing something out to Seriozha. On Koniushkovskaya Street, beyond the Presnensky Ponds, one could distinctly see the horse-mounted dragoons with their dark-brown uniforms and their rifles. Bolotov began to count. The dragoons were circling the ponds in rows of three and were heading for the observatory at an even trot. Bolotov counted ninety-six men.

"Positively less than two hundred yards," remarked Vanya. "It would be nice to take a shot at them."

"Let them come nearer," Roman Aleksieyevich replied nervously and coughed in his dry, consumptive way.

"There, look, look! The high and mighty mister officer!" Pronka laughed again, pointing his finger at the mounted officer, who had left his men and was entering the street on his black horse. "Ah, the devil take him, how bold he is! Just look at him, Sergey Vasilyevich! Let me take a shot at him," he said to Seriozha smiling.

Seriozha made no reply, looking attentively at the dragoons. They turned the ponds and began to form into close formation.

Pronka jerked his head impatiently:

"Sergey Vasilyevich, so help me God, it's the best chance."

Bolotov looked over Pronka's shoulder. There seemed not a moment to lose; the very time to fire, he thought, was while the dragoons were dismounting. He was already accustomed to look upon armies with indifference and await their attack without excitement. He had always been sure that no infantry in Moscow could withstand the fire from a barricade and no officer could force

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his soldiers to advance to certain senseless death. Perhaps for that very reason the hunter's lust had awakened and grown in him, a wolfish feeling, which he had never known and of which he was secretly ashamed. By Pronka's straining face and sparkling eyes, and by the concentration of his comrades he could judge that the same feeling possessed them all, that they were all waiting impatiently for Seriozha's command to shoot and all hoped to kill the officer. Bolotov was not afraid for himself. That he could be wounded or killed had never even occurred to him. During the many days of the uprising they had lost only one man, with the exception of David, and that because he had gone out into the street and begun to shoot in sight of the soldiers. Seriozha was silent, as if trying the obedience of his men. Finally he gave the command unwillingly:

"One—two—shoot!"

The last word was scarcely out of his mouth when Pronka and Konstantin, having guessed that his permission was coming, shot simultaneously. Then all the revolvers and rifles went off one after the other. Bolotov was also shooting. He selected a red sergeant with moustachios, who was first man in the first row, and took aim long and carefully, trying to calculate the distance and make sure of his man. He gave no thought to it that he was aiming at a human being. In his eyes, he was not that, not even an enemy, but an inanimate object, a target, at which he had to shoot and which he must not miss. At last he pulled the trigger, and when the smoke had cleared away, he saw that the dragoons were mounting their horses and turning back in disorder. The sergeant was not wounded. The men on the barricade were now shooting

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at them continuously, without doing any harm. On the trampled snow lay two human bodies and near them the officer's thoroughbred horse was jumping about on three legs, bending her fourth one, which had been struck above the knee. Konstantin exclaimed triumphantly:

"Comrades, the officer is killed! So help me God! I'll run and take a look." He jumped over the bulwark and made his way slowly to the dead soldiers without paying any attention to the dragoons, who had stopped beyond the Presnensky ponds. Pronka leaned over the barricade and shouted in a thin, frightened voice:

"Kensentin, come back; Come back, Kensentin!"

Bolotov returned to the bonfire.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE evening passed quietly. The dragoons did not disturb the barricades again. The terrorists retreated to the school-house and spent the night in the uncomfortable unpainted class-room, on the floor among the desks. A lamp diffused a dim light. The room was stuffy and smelled of kerosene, cheap tobacco, damp sheepskin, and the odour of men sleeping in their clothes. Bolotov could not rest. About three o'clock in the morning he rose, picked his way over his comrades, and went out into the street.

Towards morning it became frostier. The heavens were starry. In the east shone the Big Dipper, its handle pointing downwards. A motionless shadow loomed up from the dark bulwark of the barricade. Konstantin was on sentry duty. The fire was dying out, but a thin trembling bluish flame was still fighting the night. At the fire Seriozha was squatting on his heels with his hands clasping his knees and his eyes fixed on the red coals. Every now and then the fire lighted up his hands and heavy peasant boots. His shoulders, chest, face and blond curly hair were lost in the darkness. Bolotov came near him. Seriozha moved in silence and was immediately, as if by magic, swallowed up in the darkness.

Bolotov's face and feet felt hot at the fire, but his back and neck were freezing. He threw his cigarette butt into the fire and said:

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"I can't understand it, Seriozha. We are being shot to death, hanged, strangled. We hang others, strangle and burn. But why is it, if I kill Sliozkin, I am a hero; but if he hangs me, he is a scoundrel? That is fit for Hottentots. Either one must not kill, in which case both Sliozkin and I are criminals, or killing is permissible, and neither he nor I are heroes, nor scoundrels, but merely men and enemies.

"Volodya says," Bolotov continued to think aloud, "that's all sentimentality and when one's at war one must kill without mercy. *À la guerre comme à la guerre.* Well, of course, one must. So we are killing. But tell me this, may we assume that Sliozkin persecuted us out of principle, not for gain? May we assume that he considered it his duty to fight us, in the interests of the people, not his own? May we assume it? Yes? It's possible, isn't it? It's possible that one out of a hundred or a thousand Sliozkins should be like that, isn't it? It's possible, eh? Well, then, where is the difference between him and me? It's my opinion that either murder is always permissible—or never."

Konstantin climbed down from the dark barricade, and passed them yawning, looking red in the firelight. Seriozha followed him absently with his eyes and said:

"Where are you going, Konstantin?"

"Relief, Sergey Vasilyevich."

"Relief?"

"Exactly, relief."

"How many times have I told you," Seriozha remarked indignantly, "not to leave the barricade without permission? Whose turn is next?"

"Roman Aleksieyevich's."

Roman Aleksieyevich, tall, slim and stooping, looking

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like a strange long-legged bird in the night, was coughing on the porch. The revolver clicked in his hands.

"Roman Aleksieyevich!" Seriozha called in a kind voice.

"What is it?"

"You ought to get some sleep. I'll take your place. I'm not sleeping anyway."

"What do you mean? How can I? It's no hardship to me."

Coughing and groaning, he climbed painfully on to the bulwark and moved about in the snow. When he became quiet at last, Seriozha shook his head:

"He's at the edge of the grave. What a pity!"

Bolotov felt slighted that his thoughts, which seemed so deep and significant should be so rudely interrupted. He was silent for a while and then began again pensively:

"Then it must not and ought not be? Then where is the law? In the Party program? In Karl Marx? In Engels? In Kant? But that's all nonsense," he whispered in agitation. "Neither Marx, nor Engels, nor Kant ever killed people. You hear? Never, nobody. Then they can not know what I know, what you or Volodya know. Whatever they may write, it will remain a mystery to them whether or not it is right to kill. We alone know it, we, those who have killed. I for instance, know it was not right to kill Sliozkin, whatever he might have been, whatever I might have been, whatever I might have thought of him."

As Bolotov went on, he felt greater and greater surprise at himself, at his boldness, at his audacious questions. Those weak beggarly thoughts which had been born on that unfortunate night had never before been put

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into words; and now, as he was saying them aloud, he felt frightened; he felt he was lying to himself. But he could not see where the lie came in.

"But we did kill him," he finished in anguish and was silent.

"Sliozkin ought not to have been killed," said Seriozha in a bored tone as if half asleep, "and may a dragoon be killed?"

"A dragoon?"

"Yes, a dragoon. Why speak only of Sliozkin?"

"A dragoon also—"

"There! But you would kill him like a fly and still your conscience would be clear. Who killed the officer yesterday? You? I? Konstantin? Why doesn't that affect you? Certainly the officer wasn't guilty of anything. He was merely carrying out orders. Then why kill him?" Seriozha continued in a voice of anguish, new to Bolotov. "Is it because we were all shooting and we can not establish whose bullet killed him? Is it because the officer was not wailing, or if he was, we could not hear him? You say, we must not kill. Perhaps, you really are of that opinion. But you could not feel the dragoon's death, you could not see his death. He merely fell off the saddle, as far as you are concerned. But at Sliozkin's his wife was crying."

"You're right." Bolotov was lost in thought. He was not surprised that Seriozha divined and even disputed his thoughts. "But that's still worse. I can't understand a thing then. You know, before I had had occasion to kill, I thought it was all very simple. The Party gives orders to kill, and you kill. And the man that does the killing is a hero, he sacrificed his life.

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That's the way I thought for a long time. But now I see it's a lie. One must not and should not kill. Explain it. I can't understand it."

"Ah, explain!" Seriozha smiled bitterly. "How can I explain? How do I know? How can we know? I know one thing, if you go anywhere, go to the end, or don't go at all. And I also know," he added in a softer voice, "whoever raises his sword shall perish by the sword."

The door on the staircase creaked. Vanya approached the fire slowly, and stuck his hands over it and raised his narrow, slanting Asiatic eyes up to the sky.

"Can't you sleep?" Seriozha asked.

"No," answered Vanya, yawning and slapping his hand to his mouth. "It must be about six o'clock. Look how many stars are out." He sat down in the snow and began to roll a cigarette. "A frost is surely coming. Konstantin was looking at the dead officer last night," he went on, removing a hot coal from the fire. "He says he was refined and young, well-fed. The bullet must have gone through his heart. A dog may have good teeth and still be cheap," he added scornfully.

"You see," Bolotov said pointing to Vanya, "he sees no problem at all—well-fed dog. Nobody."

It was dawning. Pale, greyish streaks appeared in the east, and the stars began to dim and fade away. The fire flashed up for the last time. A handful of red-hot lumps of coal illuminated the half-circle of melted snow around it, the black earth, which was freezing off, and Seriozha's face, which remained expressionless, as if carved in stone.

"Of course, a dog. What else?" Vanya yawned.

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"But it's not a dog, Vanya, it's a human being."

"Of course, I know. But what else can we do? Should we look out for their safety?"

"But killing's a sin, Vanya."

"I know it is," Vanya replied after a pause, without raising his eyes. "Only what's to be done? If you call yourself a mushroom, get into the basket. And as to sins, God shall judge."

"God?"

"I don't care for any of those words," Vanya cried suddenly, indignant and flushed. "I know 'for land and freedom!' That's all and no more. Yes, for land and freedom!" he repeated in a quieter tone and turned to Seriozha.

"Have you an idea, Sergey Vasilyevich, when Vladimir Ivanovich will be back?"

Seriozha did not answer. He turned his head towards Prudova Street and began to listen. In the dawning he appeared all grey—a grey face, a grey cap, a grey jacket and boots. On the barricade Roman Aleksieyevich began to cough and move about. One could see how he got up, put his broad palm to his ear and listened. A dry frosty December morning was dawning. Every sound was distinct and resonant in the pure, cold, transparent air. The sound of wheels could be heard somewhere at a distance, beyond the Presnensky Ponds. Bolotov trembled. A moment later one could distinctly hear the sound of hoofs in the churned snow and a ringing clatter of iron. Vanya was the first to come to himself.

"It sounds like artillery, Sergey Vasilyevich."

Sleepy-looking Konstantin ran out from the schoolhouse and began to whisper something to Seriozha.

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Then he went over to the barricade, thought a while, and suddenly jumped over the bulwark and slid rapidly and silently along the walls of the building. The men, sullen, puzzled and shivering from cold, were gathering around Seriozha.

"Undoubtedly the Semyonov Regiment," Vanya said loudly.

"That means Volodya is lost," Bolotov thought. For the first time that week he was seized by terror. He was not trying to grasp the meaning of the word "Semyonov," but he felt vaguely that what had been till now was not the worst, but the bloody, hopeless events were still to come. He had a sensation that all around him was not Moscow in an uprising the life of which he was sharing, but a mass of pitiful ruins, a burned desert. St. Petersburg had betrayed them, the Moscow revolution was left to her own small strength, the fighting squad, hence himself, had been deserted by the Party, by all Russia. The instant he fully grasped the situation a feeling of pride and indignation took hold of him.

"We shall not surrender," he thought, and all his previous reflections about murder, death, Sliozkin and dragoons seemed futile and valueless. "What do we know?" He recalled the striking words of Seriozha. And when ten minutes later Konstantin returned all excited and told in broken whispers that Povarskaya Street was full of infantry and artillery, Bolotov listened without misgivings. "If you go, go to the end," he recalled again. And he felt no terror, but joy at the thought that the early, glorious end was inevitable.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE sun rose, and a cold, pale red set the white snow a-sparkle. Bolotov could see two cannons beyond the Presnensky Ponds, where the dragoons had dismounted the day before. Their burnished bodies and wrought-iron wheels glinted in the sunlight. There was not a soul on Prudovaya Street, and all the shutters were tightly closed. Only in the many-storied brick box—the house of merchant Chizhov, with a saloon on the ground floor—soldiers' caps and gleaming bayonets appeared in the windows. Bolotov was fully aware they could expect no mercy this time. "We shall not surrender," he repeated to himself, setting his teeth, and looking back at his silently expectant comrades. All their faces, even Pronka's, were sombre and severe. Seriozha alone was as usual. To judge by his slow motions and low, self-assured tones, one would have thought he had foreseen everything, and nothing terrible could happen, and the army would be defeated. Bolotov looked at him in admiration. He had long ceased to regret that not he, member of the committee and famous revolutionist, was in charge of the barricade, but this youthful army-deserter; and that the devoted revolutionists, from the impenetrable Roman Aleksieyevich down to the scatterbrained Pronka, were not obedient to him, Bolotov, the idol of the Party, but to the unknown Seriozha.

The mechanics were busy at the cannons. The gun-

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ner, illuminated by the slanting morning rays, was giving orders, waving his hands. He was standing to the right of the cannons and nearby a little behind them sparkled the golden buttons of an officer's uniform. A sporty lieutenant was examining the barricades with a binocular. Konstantin raised his revolver rapidly and aimed a short, solitary shot that broke the silence of the morning.

Bolotov clearly saw the bullet hit the wall without touching the gunner and a bit of the red brick wall fall to the ground. He also saw the lieutenant remove the binocular from his eyes indifferently, step aside and bow his head and examine the fragments curiously. It was strange to see those people so quietly engaged in their work. It was hard to believe that the dandified officer and the tall kind-faced gunner wanted to kill, and perhaps would kill him, Bolotov, and that their business was to kill and to shoot almost unarmed men with machine-guns. "Will they kill?" Bolotov thought, as he aimed his revolver. "Yes, of course, they will." He did not notice himself pull the trigger; but from the recoil on his shoulder and the wailing sound, he realized he had fired a shot.

"Don't quarrel with God," Vanya said ironically. "Sergey Vasilyevich, what are you waiting for?"

Sergey nodded in silence.

A thin disorderly volley of shots filled the frosty air. Pronka was shooting last and apart from the others, with his eyes half closed and a frightened look on his face, as if drowning in icy water. Bolotov smiled, so unrecognizable was the man's round, large-jawed face, which always wore a look of industriousness, but was now distorted by fear. The gunner fell to the ground,

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but even before the smoke lifted from the barricade, a white wavy cloud from the cannons arose into the frosty air. Above Bolotov's head the first shrapnel whizzed warningly. He had never heard the sound before, and did not grasp the threatening significance of it and smiled again. Pronka and Vasily Grigoryevich ducked down into the snow as if at command.

"What are you bowing for? Are you being introduced?" Konstantin said gruffly.

Then came what Bolotov would never have believed had he not lived through that day. Not one of the bitter skirmishes with the troops, not one of those cavalry attacks which the squad had been repulsing daily had even a remote resemblance to those short, rapidly passing moments. Bolotov had become accustomed to seeing the men after the first few shots abandon the dead and retreat in disorder to the barricades. Though he had known that revolvers were mere playthings and artillery would swamp the barricades and their own squad was powerless, still in the bottom of his heart he could not believe that the Semyonov Regiment would not retreat. He could not believe that all the efforts and sacrifices and sleepless nights had been in vain, that the uprising was crushed and that Moscow was again in the hands of the army. He could not believe that the Party had not and could not come to their assistance, that St. Petersburg had really betrayed them and that what had been true the day before was now, on this winter morning, in front of the warring cannons, an untruth, a monstrous lie. "They will retreat—will retreat," he kept repeating in an attempt to convince himself, now shaken by despairing anger, now hoping against hope. But a quarter of an hour passed, and still the rifles rang

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out, and the hand-grenades whizzed past and showers of shrapnel rained about him. The second shot fell about ten paces in front. The explosion split the ice, exposing the roof of an overturned car and bending the sheets of iron that covered the barricade. But after the third shot one of the men, a watchmaker's apprentice, Leizer, a dark Jew with curly hair, whom Bolotov had noticed at Sliozkin's house, sighed, dropped his revolver and clutched at his breast. He retreated slowly from the barricade, lowered his head, stood a while, as if in reflection, and dropped slowly, face downward, into the snow. Thick red foam gathered at his mouth. Soon after, the whole alley, the barricade, the troopers, the Presnensky Ponds, the saloon and the cannons were all enveloped in heavy white smoke. Bolotov heard the incessant bursting of bullets, saw the wall of smoke, and without aiming, unconscious of what he was doing, he kept on shooting. He made up his mind to the fact that he would be killed, and this, once established in his mind, he was seized by an oppressive indifference. He gave no thought to the revolution. It was of no importance whether or not St. Petersburg had revolted and whether or not Moscow was captured by the government forces. Only one thing was important, he knew he must shoot and must not leave the barricade, must defend the Party banner to the last moment even at the cost of his life. But he did not dare to look behind him. He could judge by the sound of falling bodies and the suppressed groans that many of his comrades had been wounded or killed. He was afraid to look, afraid he might lose courage and run without looking back. His revolver grew hot and the steel burned his hand, but, heedless of the pain, he kept on discharging

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the bullets that were left. Suddenly the short rapid rifle fire and the heavy cannonading were augmented by a new sound, also short and rapid, but deeper and more distinct.

"Dear me, machine-guns!" Pronka shouted desperately at the top of his voice. He threw his revolver away and dropped down into the snow. Bolotov looked at him sideways. He lay prostrate, his face buried in the snow, his hat over his brows. From under his hat, his neck with the hair cut in a semi-circle was visible. Bolotov concluded that Pronka had been killed. But Pronka moved and tugged at Bolotov's belt.

"Lie down," he whispered.

"Are you wounded?" Bolotov asked.

Pronka raised his unkempt head and shook it violently. There was fear in his eyes. To his right Vanya, gloomy and black from the smoke, was standing at the barricade, his whole attention concentrated on shooting. He turned at Bolotov's words, looked attentively at Pronka, and poked him in the side with his boot.

"Absolutely not wounded! Ah, you bastard! Get up, get up, you scoundrel!"

Pronka cautiously raised himself to his knees and with a dirty forefinger pointed out to Bolotov a soft, wet, formless mass lying near him. Bolotov bent down. He saw fragments of clothing, blood-covered feet, black laced shoes and a red stain on the melting snow. By the sheepskin hat and the broken tortoise shell pince-nez he knew it to be Vasily Grigoryevich. He was not frightened—not even surprised. It was all as it should be, there was nothing terrible in one of them having been killed. Vanya began to shout again, and Bolotov, walking around Pronka, went over to him. In the lift-

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ing gusts of smoke, through a narrow strip of light, appeared the familiar street, and the same cannons and the same party of officers in the same position near the saloon. Bolotov raised his revolver to fire at the officers, but somebody struck him on the shoulder:

"Bolotov, can't you hear? Retreat!" Seriozha shouted in his ear.

The school-house could be seen again as the smoke lifted. In the space between the school-house and the barricade, the snow was littered and ploughed up with shrapnel and bullets. They had to run across this stretch. Pronka, without rising from his knees, sheltered by the barricade, glanced around like a cat, and was the first to run, in a zig-zag, to the steps of the school-house. But when he was still far from his goal, he threw up his hands feebly and fell face downwards into the snow. The trooper who had been watching him run wavered. But Konstantin started and disappeared safely behind the door. After Konstantin, Vanya crept out stealthily.

Bolotov and Seriozha kept on shooting. They understood each other without words and decided not to leave until all the comrades were in the school-house. When the last man had run up the school steps, Bolotov, feeling that all eyes in the school-house were turned upon him, straightened up and deliberately slackening his steps advanced. His heart was beating. Those forty-five yards seemed longer than as many versts, but not once did he feel the desire to run, or any concern for his life. Much later, when he recalled those moments, he could not explain whether it had been courage, a quiet contempt for danger, or that simple indifference which one experiences when he has no fear of death because

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it is inevitable. When he mounted the steps he looked around. The alleys were still enveloped in heavy smoke. On the ruins of the demolished barricade shreds of the flag were waving on a pole. Near it a bent, dark figure was moving. Bolotov recognized Roman Aleksieyevich. He grasped the banner and jumped down awkwardly, but the next instant, like Pronka, he threw up his hands helplessly and dropped into the snow.

Then Konstantin suddenly moved away from the gloomy revolutionists, whose number had thinned down. Hunching his shoulders, as if it were raining, he jumped over prostrate bodies and ran over to Roman Aleksieyevich. Bolotov saw him raise the banner high over his head.

"He will come back," he thought indifferently, but Konstantin was already running up the stairs, pressing the red tatters to his breast.

A cold wind sprang up and began to drive the smoke away. At the other end of the alley the grey uniforms of the soldiers stretched along the houses and moved slowly in an endless, ominous chain towards the deserted barricades. They passed it and suddenly stopped at a distance from the school-house. Bolotov raised his revolver.

"Don't shoot," Seriozha held his arm.

Suddenly Bolotov saw Vanya with a triumphant indignant face and frightened Asiatic eyes lean out of the window, raise a shining box over his head, and hurl it into the crowd. There was a terrific explosion, which drowned the roar of the cannons. Yellowish smoke rose funnel-shaped from the ground. When it cleared away, the snow was covered with rifles, uniforms, caps and torn, mangled, unrecognizable human bodies. Dark-red

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spots were growing into pools among the loose stones in the road. Some three dozen soldiers were running in disorder back into the alley.

Among the revolutionists no one said a word. Revolvers were fired still more rapidly. Bolotov could not tell how long the firing lasted. He had lost all sense of time. The same sharp thought, the same insistent desire in spite of will and reason were in complete control of him. He could not have gone away even had he wanted to. So far was any thought of saving himself from his mind that he was not asking himself whether or not he should run. In fact, he was sure he would die there, in the school-house, under the torn red flag. As if through a mist he remembered afterwards that he had kept on shooting incessantly, that his bullets had kept on striking the tables and walls and doors, and the air smelled of powder and it was difficult to breathe. He also remembered that as he aimed at the artillery officer from the cover of the window frame something fell behind him and threw him to the floor. When he scrambled to his feet, the room was filled with bluish-white rings of smoke, and he realized that some shrapnel had fallen into the room. He remembered how the school-house had been set on fire, how it became still more difficult to breathe, and how crackling streaks of fire had swept the walls. And he remembered how Seriozha had caught his arm and how Seriozha, Konstantin, Vanya and himself had leapt down a charred, smoke-filled staircase. Below was the quiet empty school-house bathed in sunshine. But how they climbed over the stone fence, and how they made their way into distant streets and finally reached the suburbs of Moscow and the Sokolnichaya Grove, Bolotov could never recall.

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CHAPTER XVIII

MISHA spent the summer on the estate. Towards the end of August, when the young birches were turning yellow and the fields of buckwheat red, at the touch of the first hoar frosts, he started preparations for his trip to the university in St. Petersburg. For weeks a fine autumn rain had been falling almost continuously. In the intervals when it stopped, the sun would shine hot through fleecy clouds and draw mist from the frosty air, and turn the spider-webs flung over the serene fields into silver. The woods had long since undergone a change. The falling leaves lay rotting in the hollows in the ground amid patches of sweet-smelling grass. The birds were silent. Sometimes a wind sprang up and swayed the naked branches and whirled the fallen leaves. The orchard and the vegetable garden were radiant with colour—rosy-cheeked apples, blue-green cabbages, and yellow cucumbers. The air was redolent of hops and dill and mint.

The country roads were covered with deep black mud. The patient horses panted as they struggled tugging along the ancient lumbering travelling-coach. The autumn had set in early and was already on the wane.

Misha had been lonely all summer long. Duty, he felt, called him to St. Petersburg, where Andriusha needed him. He feared he would be late at the barricades and every day spent in the country—wilderness, he called it—was wasted. Chafing under the unpleasant experi-

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ence of enforced idleness, he evaded his mother's annoying questions and his sister's attempts at conversation, and though he was sensitive to the degradation, the pain, the fruitlessness of controversy with his father, he entered into irritating disputes with him.

On the day of his departure Misha rose at dawn and went to the stable right away to remind Tikhon it was time to harness the horses. Rain had fallen during the night. Remnants of tattered clouds were drifting in the sky. The wet branches of the half-naked birches drooped helplessly. Trudging through the mud and jumping over pools, Misha made his way to the stalls. Tikhon was not there. The place smelled of manure, saw-dust and straw. At the sound of his light steps, Golubka turned her finely shaped head and slanted her black, sparkling expressive eyes. In the neighbouring stall Zolotoy, scenting Misha's presence, pawed the ground. Misha embraced Golubka, and instantly his joy vanished. He became sad. His approaching departure no longer seemed desirable. Golubka snorted and pressed her side against the wooden partition, and turned her head, and pranced. Misha left her and ran out of the stall. On the wet, black ground trampled up and washed out by many rains, lay bundles of straw and a rusty horse-shoe. Misha picked it up for luck, as he always did. Across the yard, on the other side, were the servants' quarters of red brick. Beyond stood the green gloomy fir-trees. Misha, twirling a stick thoughtfully, went slowly back to the house. There seemed to be no reason now for his leaving. In the house, in the semi-darkness of the hall, stood Nikolay Stepanovich smoking a cigarette and conversing with the manager, Aleksey Antonovich, who stood with his bald head bent

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slightly to the side, his paunch protruding, and his soft hands folded behind his back. He listened to his employer with a hardly perceptible smile, now and then putting in short, casual remarks.

"The Kurbatovsky Woods," Nikolay Stepanovich was saying angrily, "contain only twenty-five acres. So how would it pay me to sell them for four hundred? Fancy! A nice price!"

"But it is all aspen, your excellency," said Aleksey Antonovich, raising his eyes to the ceiling and sighing.

"Well, what if it is aspen? The Mozharovs sold theirs at four-fifty. Why should our property go for nothing?"

"Very true," Aleksey Antonovich sighed again.

"So tell him that. Tell him the general doesn't agree to the price."

"Of course, I can tell him that. Why not? But—"

"Ah, Misha," Nikolay Stepanovich turned to his son. "go into the billiard room, Misha, there is a letter from Sasha."

Misha frowned. His brother's letters were always the cause of violent, undignified quarrels. The house suddenly became uncomfortable and gloomy, and the talk about woods, prices, Mozharov and sales seemed out of place and petty. The desire to leave awoke in him again. He crossed the lofty, columned salon, threw himself on the couch and waited sullenly for his father, paying no attention to his mother and sister.

A moment later the door opened, Nikolay Stepanovich entered, seated himself in his favourite soft arm-chair with the carved back, took out the letter and began to read it aloud in a solemn voice. The letter was from Kioto, and Sasha, with a soldier's exactness and without

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comment, quoted a speech made by a Japanese general to the Russian prisoners of war.

"'While you are here,'" Nikolay Stepanovich read, "'you must treat each other in a friendly way and be restrained in your behaviour, because good behaviour enhances the dignity of a soldier, and you must remember that by good behaviour the prisoners do a service to their Fatherland. Meanwhile we must await peace.'"

Nikolay Stepanovich dropped the letter, shaking with anger.

"What, what, what! A Japanese, a Japanese," he kept repeating, flushed and choking, "has the audacity to instruct—to instruct—officers of the Russian navy! Has the audacity to instruct! Has the audacity! Oh, my God, my God!"

Misha was not affected by the speech of the Japanese general, but it was unpleasant and a bore to witness his father's excitement.

"Why such solemnity, why such indignation? Sasha is a prisoner of war. Well, of course, it's not a pleasant situation. The Japanese don't respect their prisoners. But the prisoners themselves are to blame. They should have known where and for what purpose they were going and for whom they would fight. Besides, why shouldn't the Japanese give instructions? Didn't our fleet at Port Arthur and Tsu Shima prove it's not worth a cent? Aren't the Japanese cleverer, more educated, more civilized than we? Are any of the other things we do daily in Russia going on in Japan? And why doesn't papa think of those who perish for the revolution?"

Thus Misha meditated as he listened in irritation to his father, the while thinking also of his own affairs—

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that he had staid in the country so long, but, thank the Lord, was leaving today and would surely find Andriusha in St. Petersburg.

"My God, what a disgrace!" Nikolay Stepanovich said suddenly with tears in his voice. Misha could not hold himself back.

"A disgrace? Where's the disgrace? Don't our officers deserve it?"

Tatyana Mikhailovna looked at Misha reproachfully. Those irritating quarrels had cast sadness upon the whole summer and had magnified instead of diminished the stubborn family misunderstandings. Tatyana Mikhailovna never asked herself who was right. She was sorry for her husband and afraid for her son. Foreseeing that even the last day would be darkened by a dispute, she said timidly:

"Do not judge, that you may not be judged yourself, Misha!"

But Nikolay Stepanovich was already on his feet.

"No, no, no! This is unthinkable! I can't stand it any longer. You, mother, don't interfere, and you, my dear sir, you have not yet come out of your swaddling clothes. The mother's milk is not yet dry on your lips. Where's the disgrace? You can't see it? Take care, Mikhail."

Natasha went over to her father and pressed her face to his unshaven, sticky cheek and kissed him:

"Father dear, with God's mercy, Sasha will soon be here," she whispered tenderly.

"Sasha will come. He will come," Nikolay Stepanovich muttered, as he quieted down. "A shame! A disgrace! A dishonour!"

The hour of leaving came. A heavy wind was blow-

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ing in gusts, shaking the tops of the lindens and raising the decaying leaves from the ground. It was cold outside. When all seated themselves before the leavetaking, according to an ancient custom, and Misha for the last time looked at his mother's shawl and at her tearful face, Natasha's blue eyes, his father's aged face, the blackened portraits on the walls and the couches covered with checkered cloth; and when for the last time he heard Nikolay Stepanovich's gruff but loving voice admonishing him not to enter into friendship with the long-haired ones, but to study, so as to be able to serve his "Fatherland," and when he caught his sister's stolen glances, full of suppressed worry, he felt sorry again that he had to leave it all, even though it had long since become annoying to him—his mother, father, Natasha, the garden, the grove, the stream, the stalls, all that simple country life. He felt sorry for his father, old, grieved and forlorn, and for his mother, resigned and obedient. A thought entered his mind for a moment, that he was launching upon a dishonest, unkind venture and there was no one awaiting him in St. Petersburg. But the thought died out immediately.

"If I am a Socialist and a revolutionist," he said to himself, convinced that he was really both, "then I must feel no sorrow. It is my duty to give my life boldly and ungrudgingly."

He got up and went over to his mother. Tatyana Mikhailovna embraced his curly head with trembling hands and looked long into his youthful eyes, unable to tear herself away. Then raising her hand, she crossed him rapidly. Nikolay Stepanovich turned away and said in a trembling, tearful voice:

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"Well, farewell, Mikhail. God be with you. We are not parting for ever."

The wind died down. The three-horsed carriage was at the perron. Tikhon in a brown frock-coat was sitting on the driver's seat. The maid Dasha, picking up her skirts and trying not to wet her feet in the pools of water, went over to the carriage to button the leather apron. Misha waved his handkerchief and the horses started. Marshes, mile-posts, groves, and black ploughed fields began to roll by the carriage. They turned the horse-shoe shaped road and came into the Mozharov woods, which had turned dark-red. From the leaves of the hazel-trees, which were still green, big cold drops of water began to fall. The Bolotov estate disappeared. And as soon as it disappeared from sight, Misha with the light-mindedness of youth forgot about those he had left behind. He gave a sigh of relief and began to think carelessly of how he would be a student, an independent man, how he would come to St. Petersburg and would see Andriusha. The many wonderful surprises that the future had in store for him now filled his mind; and by the time the carriage had arrived at the station of Miatlevo, he felt no regret for anybody or anything.

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CHAPTER XIX

IT was not until the beginning of December that Misha succeeded in locating the Party headquarters. During the intoxicating days of the strike he had been in a joyful revolutionary state of mind, and under the influence of the short-lived freedom, had run from meeting to meeting, applauding the speakers vigorously, singing the Marseillaise, shouting "Hurrah," and demanding a constitutional assembly. He had learned the catch phrases and could talk fluently about the Party, about "progressive minimum," "labour republic," the "socialization of land." But deep in his soul he did not believe that the excitement and turmoil were the revolution. In his eyes the "real revolutionists," the people destined to build a bright, just life were Andriusha and the mysterious committee. But he did not know how to find them. At last a casual acquaintance, a bearded, long-haired student at the Institute of Technology undertook to take him to the headquarters. Misha was overcome by the profoundest gratitude, as if the student were granting him the dearest wish of his life. He made ready for the solemn event a week in advance.

"Suppose they say I'm not fit?" he asked himself in alarm. But it seemed so insulting, so unjust, so undeserved and cruel, that he rejected the idea and began to dream of that long-wished-for moment when he would see Andriusha and the committee.

"I shall enter and say: 'Comrades, I'm ready to die

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for the revolution,' and nothing more. They'll notice me and will ask me my name and age. My age is not important, I'll say, because I've decided to die anyway. Or this way: I'll enter and say: 'Take me into the fighting organization.' Or better still: 'Though I am young, my youth will not hinder me from dying for land and freedom.' And I shan't say a word about Andriusha being my brother. He will be in the next room, and they will go to tell him about the young student. He will wish to meet him and will come out to shake hands with him. And he will see me."

On the appointed day Misha dressed himself with sophomoric diligence. He used a wet brush to smooth down his refractory chestnut-coloured curly hair. He thought first of putting on his uniform with gilded buttons, then decided they might not take him for a revolutionist, but for a "mother's son," and after some deliberation put on a blouse that Natasha had embroidered for him, with his student's jacket over it. In the auditoriums he had noticed that many students went about like that with bare necks, and on examining himself in the mirror, he thought he looked both elegant and democratic. Though the appointment was for the evening, he was on the Nevsky Prospect by six o'clock. He turned slowly, as if he were going to church, to Peskaya Street, where the headquarters were located.

At Misha's timid ring, an elderly flat-chested girl in glasses opened the door slowly and said without asking anything: "Come in." In a small room, looking very much like a physician's anteroom, several men were waiting. Misha sat down in a corner and timidly examined his Party comrades. At a round table covered with a cloth sat a slim, gloomy gentleman with a lemon

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complexion and long straight hair, yawning as he looked through the magazine, *Niva*. Two men with a bored expression lounged on a velvet couch, one of them young and heavy-set, a workingman, to judge by his shirt and boots; the other a wrinkled old man dozing with his head resting on his hand. The room was quiet. The turning pages made a dry rustling. Misha wanted to smoke, but he did not dare to light a cigarette.

In about twenty minutes a curtain-covered door opened, and a shaven comrade appeared, dressed according to the rules, including the high coat collar. He was followed by a sporty student in a frock coat, who was pulling on his gloves. Misha turned his bare neck and was sorry he had not dared to put his frock coat on.

"Then I'm depending on you," said the shaven comrade, offering his hand to the student. Glancing around the room, he said in the indifferent voice of a physician receiving visitors:

"Comrades, who's next?"

The gloomy gentleman rose, buttoned up his coat, and went into the next room. The young workingman lighted a cigarette, tossing the match on the floor. His rough calloused hands, torn cap and dishevelled hair inspired Misha with awe. He was strongly impelled to start a conversation, but the man paid no attention to him: "That old man," thought Misha, as he listened to his care-free snoring, "must be a famous revolutionist, or a terrorist, or one who has served in the Schlüsselburg Fortress. If the two of them knew why I am here, they would certainly feel surprised and would want to know me better." In a distant part of the house somebody began to bang on the piano. The noise seemed

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indecent, like an affront, to Misha, just as a loud conversation would seem in a church. The old man stirred in annoyance and muttered something under his breath. The workingman stretched himself, yawned and spat out:

"I wish they'd get through soon. What are they dragging it out so for?"

Finally, after many hours' waiting, Misha was asked to enter. At the massive writing table he saw the same comrade in a high collar—Doctor Berg. A shaded lamp threw a dim light on the green cloth of the table. Vera Andreyevna paced back and forth on the soft rug unceasingly. Misha, observing the impressive ministerial working-room, the cold look on Doctor Berg's face, and tall and dry-looking Vera Andreyevna in her simple monastic dress, became utterly embarrassed. He forgot the little speeches he had so lovingly prepared, and was at a loss how to begin. He would gladly have left, had it not been too late. Doctor Berg, irritated by Bolotov's departure for Moscow, worn by sleeplessness since the night meeting at Valabuyev's, and annoyed by the number of visitors, looked at him lazily from under his glasses, and asked dully:

"What do you wish, comrade?"

Misha had not come to himself yet. He was still embarrassed and looked at Doctor Berg with frightened eyes. It seemed like unpardonable insolence, almost a crime, for him to dare to disturb people who were taken up with affairs of such national importance—the highly responsible affairs of the revolution.

Doctor Berg, playing with his silver pencil, repeated:

"What do you wish, comrade?"

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Misha, conscious of the necessity of saying something, flushed deeply and stammered, without looking at Doctor Berg, forcing out the words:

"I—I—I—would like to do some work."

"Yes?" said Doctor Berg. "Well?"

"I—I—would like to—"

"Well?"

"I would like to—in the fighting organization."

Vera Andreyevna paused in her pacing. Doctor Berg, still fingering his pencil, and not a bit surprised, no more than if the matter were a daily occurrence, familiar and tiresome, said drily:

"Why particularly in the fighting organization?"

Some one knocked at the door. The gloomy comrade with straight hair like a deacon's, whom Misha had seen in the anteroom, entered. He beckoned silently to Doctor Berg, who gave his shoulders a shrug of annoyance.

"I'll be back at once. Pardon me, comrade."

Misha remained alone with Vera Andreyevna. He felt she had him under observation. The affair now seemed not only criminal and audacious, but even absurd. He could not comprehend how he had dared to hope that he was worthy of serving the revolution, how he had dared to overlook the fact that it was ridiculous for an eighteen-year-old boy to ask admittance to the fighting organization. Besides, he did not feel at ease. He was ashamed of his embroidered blouse, fearing Vera Andreyevna might think it out of place.

"Are you a student?" Vera Andreyevna asked after a pause.

"Yes," Misha almost whispered.

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"How old are you?"

"Flunked," flashed through Misha's mind, and he answered in a barely audible voice.

"Going on my ninteenth year."

Vera Andreyevna looked at him thoughtfully. His fresh ruddy face was so youthful, his blue eyes so fine, and he was so full of young, unspent energy, that she felt sorry. With unwonted, almost motherly tenderness, she sat down on a chair near him and said gently:

"Listen. Why do you want to work in the fighting organization? Is there no other work? You can be useful anywhere. There is oppression and poverty everywhere," she sighed, "poverty everywhere. Take an interest in the workingman, go to the peasants, come to know them. The fighting work will not run away from you."

Misha was touched. He almost felt like crying, and looked gratefully at her haggard face.

"Well, of course, I will obey the committee."

Doctor Berg entered the room quietly:

"The devil take it! Barricades in Moscow! Some one must go down there," he said angrily to Vera Andreyevna, as if she were responsible for the Moscow uprising. Suddenly he turned his attention to Misha.

"All right. We will investigate. We're too busy today. Come in Saturday." He nodded as if to indicate that the interview was at an end. Misha rose.

"Barricades in Moscow. That's where the revolution is," flashed through his mind. "He says somebody must go down. My God, if only I could! Why shouldn't I?" In a guilty, pleading voice, embarrassed and afraid of a refusal, he said:

"Pardon me. I should like—"

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"What?"

"Perhaps—I could go to Moscow?"

Doctor Berg looked at him attentively and thought a while.

"You? Ahem. What's your name?"

"Mikhail Bolotov."

"Bolotov? Are you a brother of Andrey Nikolayevich?"

"Yes, yes, indeed, I'm his brother," Misha replied hastily.

Berg and Vera exchanged glances.

"When could you go?"

"Go? When? Now—this minute."

Vera Andreyevna sighed and said irresolutely:

"Why he? Do you think Andrey Nikolayevich will approve? We could find some one else."

"No, no. Please. Andriusha will be very, very glad. Oh, please. I will go," Misha interjected.

An hour later Misha received his Party pass-words, and was entrusted with a secret mission to his brother. When he came out into the street, the night was well advanced. On the lively Nevsky Prospect blue electric lamps were throwing a dazzling light. Above them the sky was as black as ink and the stars were hidden.

"In Moscow there are barricades," Misha repeated fervently. "In Moscow there's Andriusha, and I'm going to Moscow—on a mission from the committee. Yes, on a mission from the committee. How splendidly everything had turned out. Here it was, the great revolution!" He looked at his watch and ran to the Nikolayev railroad station.

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CHAPTER XX

AT Doctor Berg's advice, Misha, in the interests of "secrecy," left his train at the Likhoslavl station and took the Viazma train. After a wait of five endless hours in Viazma, he left at night for Moscow. Early in the morning the train stopped suddenly at Golitzin.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the train is not going any farther. All out, please," announced the snow-covered conductor, going through the coaches.

"Why isn't it going farther?" Misha demanded, blocking the conductor's way. The thought that he might not reach Moscow that day sent a chill through him.

"Because it won't go," the conductor replied and turned the handle of the door.

"For God's sake, I really must get there," Misha pleaded.

The conductor looked around timidly.

"The strike committee has ordered us to stop."

The drowsy passengers were leaving the cars, grumbling and cursing. Their breath formed a white cloud of steam in the frosty air. In Golitzin everything was as usual, as peaceful as though there were no barricades in Moscow. There was a clatter of dishes in the station buffet. At the window the telegraph operator worked tirelessly at his apparatus. The young stationmaster paced the platform, plucking his little beard. Misha ran over to him:

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"Please—how can I get to Moscow?"

The station-master waved his hand irritably.

"How do I know? Don't bother me. Is it my fault? There was a telegram along the line. The whole road is on strike."

"What shall I do?" Misha thought despairingly. He pushed his way to the buffet, where he gulped down a glass of tasteless, scalding-hot tea. "I must get to Moscow. I can't turn back. It would be a shame. The comrades, Andriusha, are fighting in Moscow, and I must stick here, in this damned Golitzin. No, impossible! I must go. But how? Surely not on foot? Why not hire a team?"

He paid his bill hurriedly, ran outside, looked for the station-master's cap with its red band, saw it, and accosted him again.

"What do you want? I've told you already—"

"But it's extremely important. For God's sake, tell me what to do. Can I get horses? I will pay—"

The perplexed station-master flung out his hands.

"Horses? To Moscow? I don't know. Wait." He became sympathetic. "There is a locomotive on the emergency track. It's going to Moscow. Ask them. Perhaps, they'll take you along. But I doubt it." Turning on his heels, he went into the station-master's room.

Misha ran to the emergency track, jumping over the rails and leaving footprints in the downy snow. A heavy freight locomotive was getting up steam. Two men, black with soot, were working on the platform. "My God, they won't take me!" Misha thought apprehensively.

"What do you want?" asked the black fireman in

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an unfriendly tone, as Misha stopped breathlessly near the locomotive.

"Gentlemen, is this locomotive going to Moscow?"

"If you know too much, you'll get old too soon."

"But—I was told—" Misha began timidly, with tears in his voice and raising his excited ruddy face. "I must go to Moscow on very important business. Very. My only hope lies in you."

"What's your business in Moscow?"

Misha was embarrassed. He did not dare to entrust to a stranger the fact that he was a member of the Party and was going on a revolutionary mission, and it was difficult to find an innocent reason. The fireman was looking at him with a fixed unfriendly gaze, waiting for a reply.

"Oh, well, I'll take a chance. There's no way out anyway." Misha tossed his curly head and said in a choking voice:

"There is an uprising in Moscow."

"Well, have you got a godmother there?"

"For Christ's sake, take me along."

"Take you along? You're too simple. Get out of here while there's a piece of you left."

The whistle blew shrilly. The locomotive would start in a second. In a panic at losing his last and only hope, he caught on to the handle of the platform.

"For God's sake! I—I—I'm from the fighting organization."

The middle-aged engineer with his grey moustache looked down and observed Misha curiously.

"From the fighting organization?"

"Yes, yes."

"You? Have you a revolver?"

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"A revolver?" Misha asked, dazed by the question.

"Yes, a revolver."

"No, I have no revolver."

The engineer smiled derisively.

"A fine revolutionist! Well, God be with you, climb up," he added suddenly in a kindly tone and offered Misha his hand. Misha could hardly believe his ears, as he climbed into the locomotive and sat down unobtrusively on a heap of coals. Now he had no doubt that the locomotive belonged to the committee, and the engineer and his helper, as well as the station-master and the conductor, were excellent folks, revolutionists, terrorists, perhaps.

"They shall see that I, too, am a devoted member of the Party," he thought, impatiently waiting for the whistle to blow. The fireman bent over the lever.

"Shall we start, Yegor Kuzmich?"

"What else shall we do? Plant cabbages?"

The whistle blew again shrilly. The locomotive started slowly, as if unwilling to be on its way. Golitzin passed, the red cap, the platform, the station buffet and the operator bending over his apparatus. Ahead of them, between blue-white snow-drifts, stretched the narrow roadbed. The air began to smell of hot smoke. A frosty wind beat against their cheeks. Misha was cold, but suffered in silence, afraid of irritating the engineer. "How surprised Andriusha will be when I tell him about my trip, and how glad he'll be that the road has gone on strike! How splendid, and what a fine man Yegor Kuzmich is," he thought, swinging his arms to warm up.

"Are you cold?" the fireman asked, smiling.

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"No, that's all right," Misha replied bravely, though his teeth were chattering.

"Sit down near the tender. We are not cold."

Misha moved over to the tender and soon warmed up.

A quarter of an hour later, to the accompaniment of the thundering wheels and intermittent whistle, Misha was relating all the Party secrets known to him, who he was and why he was going to the committee in Moscow.

"It's nothing that I have no revolver," he explained with a serious face. "I shall be on the barricades just the same. I've made up my mind to, and when I make up my mind to a thing, I do it. I think one must first decide what one can and what one cannot do. The revolution is no joke. If you can't do fighting work, you needn't undertake it. I think it's dishonest to."

Yegor Kuzmich, with his eyes fixed on the running rails, only lifting them to glance at the monometer occasionally, gave Misha close attention; and it was impossible to tell whether or not he approved of all he said. Misha very much wanted to ask why the locomotive was going alone, with no cars behind it, to Moscow. Deep in his soul he had no doubt that Yegor Kuzmich was also hastening to the barricades.

The locomotive rushed along at full speed, gave one last despairing whistle, and suddenly came to a stop in the fields, half a verst from Moscow.

"Well, good-bye, young man." And Yegor Kuzmich slapped Misha on the back. "Take care, don't put your head in the noose before father does. We're here. Get out."

Misha was sorry to part with his friends. Secretly, he dreaded solitude. But he jumped out into the snow-

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drift, fell on his hands and all wet and dirty, black with soot and covered with snow, he made his way past the Vagankov Cemetery to the deserted Zvenigorod Road. To his great disappointment, there were no barricades in sight.

The weather was very cold and he met few people. But the stores were open and he saw no patrols. In spite of Dr. Berg's directions, he was unable to find the Gargarin Alley. He did not dare to ask anybody the way, and wandered about aimlessly for a long time, surprised and indignant that he saw no revolutionists and no red banners. It was already growing dark when he came to Sivtzov Vrazhek Street. After wandering about for another half hour he suddenly came upon the house he was looking for.

He rang the bell, and waited a long time, but all was silent. He rang again. Still silence. After ringing a third time and waiting, he had about given up hope when a pert maid in white cap and apron appeared on the threshold:

"Gone. They're all gone. You needn't ring."

Misha's heart fell within him. Who was gone? Gone where? How could that be? These were the Party quarters. How would he find Andriusha? Impossible. He looked at the maid irresolutely.

"It's impossible. I have important business."

"Indeed? That's no reason. I told you, they're all gone. A good many of you are wandering about now."

She banged the door indignantly. Misha walked away slowly and sadly. "What shall I do now?" he thought in despair, as he wandered aimlessly about Moscow. In the park, the birches—those fairy trees—were glistening with snow crystals in the sun. Misha, crushed by his

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failure, kept looking for at least the remains of a barricade, for at least some trace of an uprising.

"The road has gone on a strike. Surely there is an uprising in Moscow," he kept repeating, almost at the point of tears because he had not fulfilled his mission, could not find Andriusha, and saw no fighting in Moscow. But on turning into Tverskaya Street he heard to his right, from the Srietenka Streèt side, a distant, barely audible crackling. He did not believe his own ears, and stopped to listen, holding his breath. But again, this time more distinctly, as if just around the corner, he heard a short volley of shots. "Oh! Oh! Oh! Our sins!" said a passing merchant, took off his hat and crossed himself. A Cossack patrol rode by at top speed.

"Thank God, here they are, the barricades," Misha concluded without hesitation, and ran happily to Srietenka Street. On Petrovka and Dmitrevka Streets there was not a soul, and the stores were locked. He hurried along the middle of the road over the snow, afraid he might come too late, and the shooting would be over and he would not find the barricade and would be unable to help in saving it. Crossing a wide boulevard, he ran into the Golovin Alley and stopped like a statue. About twenty yards away a handful of men in fur jackets were clinging to a snow barricade and shooting towards Srietenka Street. Forgetting he had no arms and was a stranger to the comrades, thinking of nothing except that in front of him was the red banner of the revolution he ran forward along the alley. Suddenly, as if at a command, the men on the barricade ceased shooting. Misha saw people running in a close mass. He looked at them in surprise and fear, not understanding their flight.

"My God, they are retreating!" the terrible thought

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flashed through his mind. Ignorant of the cause of their retreat and of what he himself was doing, conscious only that the barricade was being abandoned to the army, he shouted in a ringing voice: "Forward! For land and freedom!" And shouting steadily he ran to meet the revolutionary squad. Without looking back to see whether anybody was following him, he climbed up the barricade. A few shots rang out from the direction of Srietenka Street. One of the running revolutionists looked back. He saw a rosy-faced young student, bareheaded, lying against the ruined barricade, his face up-turned, and his wide-open blue eyes gazing fixedly and wonderingly at the sky. The man did not stop to find out who the stranger was, but turned the corner and ran to join his comrades.

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PART II

CHAPTER I

THE Moscow uprising was crushed. The delegates of the Workmen's Council had been arrested, and the soldiers' revolts drowned in blood. The Government was the victor. But faith in the revolution was still so strong, and distrust of the Government so deep-rooted, the feeling that significant events were about to take place so acute that neither Party members, ministers, members of the fighting organization, workers, soldiers, nor any one of those who had participated in the furious merciless battle, had any doubt that on the morrow the last and most tremendous wave would break ultimately, a national armed revolt of all Russia. The death of Plehve, Red Sunday, the explosion of the 4th of February, the revolt on the battleship *Potiomkin*, the general strike of the 6th of October, and the Moscow barricades seemed only a majestic beginning, a solemn prelude to those inevitable, triumphant events which were bound to come.

And the Government was secretly devising "means of action," was gathering the army, was buying spies, filling the prisons and erecting gallows; while the revolutionists were openly printing pamphlets, preparing bombs, distributing arms, organizing a peasant army, and demanding a constitutional assembly. Nobody considered that the revolution had already been crushed.

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In the autumn months the Party committee had written and printed a proclamation and sent out agents all over Russia. These agents, distinguished revolutionists, explained at many meetings the significance of the Party convention that had been called to decide the fate of the revolution, and invited the comrades to elect delegates. Though the Party was united by a committee and bound together by bloody ties, still it lacked that internal unity which instils strength into a secret organization. Three factions were continuously wrangling, and this was the source of exasperating outbursts.

One of the factions, which had made a study of the peasant and labour questions and the industrial conditions in Russia, demanded the socialization of land. Another faction, supporting itself upon the same learned books, demanded the socialization of shop and factories. The third demanded neither one nor the other, but an obligatory redemption of the land. And the right, the left, the committee, the Party, Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg, Vera Andreyevna, all looked upon these differences as of decided importance. They did not see that the revolution had been defeated and that they were not destined to gain the upper hand, nor, even if they should gain the upper hand, that the rearrangement of Russia would not depend on their conscious will, but on a thousand unknown, unforeseen and inevitable causes. They sincerely believed that the Party discussions as to how to divide the land equitably and reconstruct Russia would hasten and strengthen the revolution and decide the future of a land of a hundred million inhabitants.

The convention that the Party was convoking at the cost of untold sacrifice, labour and danger, was to decide the all-Russian land problem, much as if the crew of a

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ship in a storm should abandon the steering-wheel, lower the sails, extinguish the lights and forget the plight of the ship, and plunge into a heated discussion as to what port to steer their boat to after the wind had died out and the waves had quieted down. But no one of the comrades understood the fruitlessness of their senseless discussions. In great hope and impatience, all awaited that historic event—the Party convention.

It was to assemble secretly in the Party hotel in one of the suburbs of St. Petersburg. A large room papered in pink and pervaded by a sour smell of dirt was the office, presided over by Zalkind and two assistants, young men with severe-looking faces, who busily examined the delegates' credentials when they arrived and made up the "itineraries" for their secret return. In the woods outside the hotel an armed guard kept vigil day and night, for protection against the police. When Bolotov, tired and frozen, wearing the same fur jacket in which he had fought in Moscow, entered the cold hall, he paused involuntarily. From oil lamps, hanging on the black ceiling, a dim light fell on the big, crowded room. In the intermissions between sessions voices buzzed simultaneously, filling the stuffy air with a thick, heavy rumbling. In the left corner a little consumptive-looking bald gentleman with a curly beard was engaged in a heated discussion with Doctor Berg. Bolotov recognized the famous Party agitator, Gennady Gennadievich. On the right side of the room, at a decrepit piano, sat a very young blond comrade striking the worn keys with great fervour, head thrown back.

"We shall fill our cartridges,
To the guns attach the bayonets"

sang an uneven chorus of many voices. Bolotov noticed

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a pale, slender girl with black hair. Looking straight ahead with dark, rapt eyes, she sang the hackneyed words with all her might. To her they had not lost their vivifying force.

"Into the happy land of freedom
We shall boldly make our way."

The pianist finished with a passionate gesture and arose noisily from his chair. In the next room a bell was ringing unceasingly. The intermission was over. The session had opened.

Immediately a few dozen men, representing a few hundred other revolutionists like themselves, began to discuss problems that they knew to be insoluble, oblivious of the fact that self-denial, readiness to give their lives and devotion to the revolution gave them no right to direct the destinies of Russia, just as this right was not given by machine-guns, prayers for the autocracy and faithfulness to it. They were oblivious of the fact that their decision, if not upheld by the people, would invariably remain on paper only, just as the orders of the ministers would, if they were not upheld by bayonets. And most important of all, they were oblivious of the fact that they were not called upon to direct the revolution, that they were not its masters, but its obedient, impotent servants. And having gathered together from over hundreds and thousands of versts away, they were naïvely convinced that the majority of votes cast at their convention, the defeat of the left or the victory of the right, could change the fate of Russia, or retard the lofty course of the revolution, or dry up its sources. Not one of them saw they were as powerless to do this as words are powerless to change life.

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The question of an uprising was in order. Though everybody could see that the question was futile and that neither the convention, nor the Party, nor the committee could order a popular revolution, or appoint the time for it, and though every one of the delegates knew from his own ant-like work that the people did not want or did not dare to revolt, still all began to argue heatedly, and the convention was immediately divided into two factions. The comrades sincerely believed that their arguments, discussions, votes, and general excitement, were of inestimable service to the Party and to Russia.

The first speaker was Gennady Gennadievich. He straightened himself up to his full height, which made him taller and more erect, and began in the firm voice of a man who knows his carefully thought-out words to be true:

"Comrades! We are called upon here in this authorized convention to decide a momentous question. We must ask ourselves, what would be the fate of a deliberately planned uprising if such should take place. I think we are faced with both chances of success and reasons to be pessimistic. Let us get down to the concrete situation. The government machine is entirely disorganized, the bourgeoisie is partly organized, partly disorganized; the great masses of the people are dissatisfied; the impoverished peasantry is famished and desperate. On the one hand a weakened power of resistance, on the other a readiness for decisive action and an immense power for offensive action."

Gennady Gennadievich paused and continued in an excited voice, bringing each word out distinctly.

"But, comrades, we must not overlook the negative side. For the organization of a movement to be suc-

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cessful it is necessary to comprehend all its problems. The peasantry is waiting for an agrarian upheaval, and we, the conscious minority, have the right and the power and the obligation to exert all our creative ability on the ground that has been prepared by a powerful movement. We must immediately begin practical preparations for the organization of a popular armed uprising. This is the most important, the essential problem of the moment."

A youth of about twenty, a delegate from the Volga region, a ruddy, round-faced seminary student, who was standing next to Bolotov, punctuated the speaker's words with loud applause:

"Bravo! Exactly! Immediately!"

Gennady Gennadievich coughed, and, heartened by the applause, certain of his usual brilliant success, raised his voice and began to gesticulate animatedly:

"Our first practical aim must be the acquisition of special military knowledge by the greatest number of our comrades. Our second practical aim must be the organization of local military cadres. The purpose of these cadres is the following: first, to teach."

Gennady Gennadievich spoke sincerely, and everything he said was clear and important to the participants of the convention. Bolotov believed that Gennady Gennadievich himself, and Vera Andreyevna, and Doctor Berg, and the ruddy seminary-student, and every one who listened to the words about an armed uprising, were ready at any moment, with arms in their hands, to defend a barricade and to die defending it. And yet he was bored. Somehow he recalled the talk of the Austrian military staff and the scientific discussions of Pfuhl: *"Die erste kolonne marschiert."* Had Mos-

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cow been defeated because the revolutionists had not known how to fight? Had the army been victorious because he was not a military man? Had Pronka been killed because he had been ignorant of tactics and strategy? Must Konstantin be taught special sciences? Was the truth there in that hotel, in the fact that they were going to compose the best recipe for making a popular revolution and were going to formulate instructions for fighting at the barricades? Only a few hundred had fought. Why hadn't the whole of Moscow revolted? Because there were no cadres?

"Fourth, these cadres must take upon themselves the initiative of an uprising and must form a military-revolutionary staff. Then, on the one hand—

Die zweite kolonne marschiert, Bolotov thought, smiling sadly to himself. His shoulders drooping, he walked out into the narrow, dusty, carpeted hall. The head of the office, Zalkind, old, wrinkled, sickly looking, yet all excited and happy, was pacing the hall.

"Well, quite a convention! Don't you think so?"

Bolotov looked at him silently. "Don't you think so? Don't you think it's excellent? And Gennady! He's an orator! A. Danton!"

Zalkind opened the door part way and listened greedily.

"Bravo! Bravo! Wonderful!" He turned to Bolotov.

Bolotov went out into the street, his shoulders still drooping. The snow sparkled like silver and weighted down the fir-trees. A tired man on guard was asleep in front of the door. Up in the frosty heavens the Big Dipper sparkled indifferently.

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CHAPTER II

DURING the conversation Andrey Bolotov experienced the alarm that a member of a united, loving family experiences when he knows that his brothers have been lost in the dark of the night. The Moscow barricades had made a deep, indelible scar, as if in the scattered bodies on the snow Bolotov had left a part of his self, of his double life. The zealous concern of a property-owner, which he had felt abroad, the severity of a man with power, the cautiousness of a careful owner, had all gone for ever. It was strange now to recall that naïve period, when the Party with its conventions, barricades, committees, excitements and alarms appeared to him like a flourishing estate; when he had looked upon himself as the most devoted, most useful, most self-sacrificing of its numerous members; when, he now had to admit, he sat in judgment and rendered decisions and verdicts. It was strange to believe that he had calculated his forces like a miser and guarded his own life in the name of the cause. But strangest of all was what he saw at the convention. He saw that the delegates, young and old; terrorists, rank-and-filers, moderates, extremists were doing what he had been doing all his life and what he now considered mistaken and unnecessary, making decisions, passing judgment, being merciful, conserving their strength in the name of the Party, and trying to divert the revolution in the name of the people. He could not see any value in their

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labour. It was as if the rifles and machine-guns, the bombs and the blood had opened his eyes.

Like the others, he did not realize that the Government had come out victorious, and believed that tomorrow an all-Russian conflagration would break out and the final glorious battle take place. But while he shared these rosy dreams, he did not close his eyes to the painful fact that the Moscow barricades had taught him a truth at which he had previously guessed only vaguely. Now he comprehended it and felt it with his whole soul. He had learned what it means to kill and to die. When he had entered the Party, he had been at a loss to solve the problems of violence. The Party dogmas gave the answer that stilled all doubts and satisfied him, as they had Volodya, Doctor Berg, Arseny Ivanovich and Vera Andreyevna. He did not ask himself what terror was. Terror was being discussed in the newspapers, was being urged by proclamation, was approved by the Party program. As a member of the Party and a revolutionist he could not and thought perhaps he had no right to reexamine a problem that had long been decided. Because of this he had not been able to grasp the meaning of terror, the hidden, terrible meaning of permissible violence. And now he felt sorry for himself, sorry for those who, without understanding what it meant to kill, were calling to a "bloody battle." The barricades had also taught him that it was impossible to direct the revolution, that those who were directing it were only obediently following the mandates of the people. When he had been giving secret orders, when he had seen the devotion of his subordinate comrades, and had not doubted their willingness to give their lives, he had gradually become accustomed to the thought that he, Andrey Bolotov,

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and in his person the committee, and in the personnel of the committee the whole Party, were directing the all-Russian revolution. He had believed that he was the builder of the radiant future and that the revolted people would hear his voice and would take the road that he would point out. Now he felt depressed that he had been so egregiously led astray.

He had grown thinner, rougher, and had discarded collar and coat. A similar change had taken place in his inward being. Witnessing the solemn convention, hearing the impassioned speeches of Gennady Gennadievich, the cold discussion of Doctor Berg, the tearful complaints of Vera Andreyevna, he knew firmly, unwaveringly that those discussions were a trackless way. He knew that his comrades would discuss either the revolutionizing of Russia, a thing that was not in their power, or unimportant Party details. Those noisy debates, speeches and elections, he was now aware, would not build up the Party nor crown the revolution with success. He thought of Volodya and did not deem his words worthy of consideration, perceiving that Volodya too did not understand death nor appreciate the grave responsibility of violence. And if Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg and Vera Andreyevna confined themselves to martial words, then Volodya, despising the chatter of the "Intellectuals," did not shrink before blood.

However, in spite of such thoughts as these and though he felt sorry for his comrades, Bolotov at the same time experienced a sense of joy, of a soul at peace, as if he had finally found the key of the solution of the eternal, insoluble problem.

Bolotov spent the night in the hotel in which the convention was taking place, in a little room with a plank

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partition for a wall. The room smelled of lamp-oil and some other sour, indefinable odour that choked. Through a slit in the door a yellow ray of light leaked in from the hall. In the next room a slow conversation was going on. Bolotov listened instinctively. A slow dull voice was speaking in a monotonous, uninteresting strain.

"The thing is this. Hm. The election for the Duma is approaching. Hm. What do you think, Sanka, will they permit the election or not?"

"To the devil," the unseen Sanka replied scornfully. "They'll elect head hostlers."

"Head hostlers?"

"Well, don't you think they will?"

A bed squeaked behind the partition. Some one sighed and moved in his bed. A moment later the same slow voice drawled:

"The thing is this. Hm. And I, you know—think—that the peasants will elect members of the Left!"

"The Left? Nonsense."

"I think so."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because."

"Because? You're a wise man, by God! Well, if they will, the Duma will be disbanded."

"Disbanded? The thing is this—this. Let them shoot all the members of the Duma. The more, the better. Hm."

Some one sighed behind the partition.

"What are they talking about?" Bolotov opened his eyes lazily.

"Let them shoot them. The more, the better. What's better? Better if they hang all the Duma members. Then the peasants would understand—the peas-

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ants would understand. One cannot fight single-handed."

Two comrades passed noisily along the hall, talking loudly. Bolotov heard their voices distinctly in the stillness of the night:

"Arseny Ivanovich knows, I tell you. You listen to me. He says an uprising—"

"When?"

"In the spring, of course."

"In the spring?"

"And what did you think? Over in our parts they're just waiting for it. I tell you, among us! By God! Just let the committee give the order."

"Will the committee accede?"

"Arseny Ivanovich says why not? Listen, in our place—

"An uprising in the spring—the committee give the order." Bolotov smiled involuntarily. "And suppose a revolt does break out?" he went on with his thoughts. "Military-revolutionary cadres. Staff of officers. *Die erste kolonne marschiert.* If an uprising, a popular revolt, were to break out, then we shall be superfluous in all probability. We urge others to spill blood —and we ourselves?"

The light in the hall went out. Bolotov raised himself in bed, threw back the soiled quilt and looked into the darkness in alarm. Suddenly those annoying thoughts which had been ripening within him and of which he had been secretly afraid, burst upon his soul again with irresistible force. Clearly it was not his vocation to lead the Party, he had no right to spare his own life. The blood that had been spilled at the barricades, the blood of Skedelsky, of Pronka, of Roman

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Aleksieyevich, of Sliozkin and the officer of dragoons, of those nameless soldiers whom Vanya had killed with his vengeful bomb, did not demand a miserly grudging sacrifice, but an inspired, enlightened one. So far as the committee and the Party and even Russia was concerned, he had a right to live, to await the inevitable uprising, had a right to "prepare the revolution" and dispose of Party matters, to argue, make decisions, and cast his vote; but if there was a higher and truer judgment; not the judgment of Arseny Ivanovich, of Doctor Berg, of the Party convention, if there was an untold, grateful sense of responsibility, then he must be a servant of the revolution and offer himself to the people. Offer his immortal life. As soon as this became clear to him, he felt a reverent rapture, as if a heavy load had fallen from his shoulders, as if he had found salutary freedom.

"Let them await the uprising. Let them hope for the dissolution of the Duma," he thought joyfully. "I know what to do. I can't and have no right to live. Be it terror. Be it murder. Be it crime. Be it blood. If there is truth on earth, if everything in life is not senseless and false, then there will be a phantom of truth, a shadow of justice in my voluntary death." Turning his face to the thin partition, which smelt of glue, he soon slept, a care-free happy sleep.

At the other end of the hall, in a dirty room with muslin curtains at the windows and a double bed with down pillows, the "plenary" meeting of the committee was taking place. The only one missing was Arkady Rosenstern, who had not arrived in time for the convention. For the last few months Rosenstern had been "working" on the Volga and had been coming to St. Petersburg only occasionally. Arseny Ivanovich and

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Doctor Berg complained loudly of his long absence. Beloved by the Party, Rosenstern upheld the weighty significance of their decisions and enhanced the effectiveness of their words.

After they had gone over several pressing matters—the purchase of arms, the report of the international congress, the government "expropriations," the publication of a new paper and the assassination of the governor of Moscow—the comrades at midnight took up the question that was last on the order of the meeting, the incident that had occurred between the military organization and the Union of the Army. This incident interested the higher circles of the Party and gave food for endless discussion. Its substance was that the military organization had printed a proclamation without the knowledge of the Union of the Army, while the right to edit all "military" proclamations belonged, according to the regulations, to the Union. The significance of the affair was a matter of principle and lay in a question of jurisdiction. Has the military organization the independent right to issue proclamations without preliminary censorship?

When Bolotov knocked on the bolted door the representative of the military organization, a young, handsome student with curled moustachios, was timidly but heatedly justifying his action before Arseny Ivanovich.

"But Arseny Ivanovich, it's so simple. Let me explain. Why should we have no right to issue proclamations? The organization office has the right, the Union of the Army has the right, any district committee has the right. So why shouldn't we have the right? Let me explain. Did our proclamation contain anything contrary to the Party? Please do me the favour to look it

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over yourself. It is very bad if the comrades begin to find fault with every little thing."

"Ah, my benefactor," Arseny Ivanovich was replying expressively, "if you like gooseberries, you must also like setting your teeth on edge. Let's see. What does the constitution say?

"What is the constitution? No, I mean, what has the constitution got to do with it? I am talking common sense."

"Pardon me, Arseny Ivanovich," interrupted Doctor Berg, fixing his yellow-green tie and not looking at the student, "if you refer to the constitution, I must tell you, the paragraph in point may have a double commentary. According to the sense of the notes to the seventh article—"

"My God, is all this really so important?" thought Bolotov, as he looked over the crowded smoke-filled room. In the corner at the window he noticed to his pleasure a friend of his from the South, Aliosha Gruzdiev. Gruzdiev was also a member of the committee, but seldom took part in their meetings. He "worked" in the village, like one of the ranks, a Party worker, and shunned no sort of work, not even the petty, dirty labour. He was tall, had thick light hair and an open Russian face, and he avoided heated discussions. Bolotov knew him and loved him.

Bolotov did not hear the commentaries on the seventh article. Arseny Ivanovich saw him, smiled at him in greeting, and said to the student:

"See here, my benefactor, we will think it over. Yes, yes, we will think it over. We can't come to a decision so quickly. In due time we will notify you. Everything, my benefactor, must be done slowly and wisely,

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very wisely. We have a great deal to do. We can't take care of everything. You know the proverb: Wheat feeds the select few, while rye goes to everybody."

From the instant it became known that Bolotov had been fighting at the barricades, he had grown in the respect of his comrades. Even Doctor Berg, who had been frankly indignant at his going to Moscow, made no effort now to conceal his pleasure. Bolotov's manliness, his boldness and the surprising coincidence that had led him to risk his life on an equal footing with the nameless members and students, gave the comrades a legal right to convince themselves and others that even if the committee had not been directing the uprising, still it had taken part in it. The members of the committee had no doubt that not only had they allowed Bolotov to go to Moscow, but had even authorized him to do so in the name of the Party. And had Bolotov claimed that this was not so, that he had gone without their permission, even against their wish, they would have been sincerely surprised and even incredulous.

Bolotov now felt that his proud thoughts would sound strange to Arseny Ivanovich and to all the comrades that had not faced death. No one would understand him, his words would sound dishonest and insulting. The killing of Sliozkin, the defeat of Volodya's squad, the desperate battle for the school-house, the days of cruel, yet hazy reality, would sound to them, who had not taken part in the uprising, like nothing more than an interesting tale of the barricade, the brief account of a casual observer. He felt he lacked the fiery words to tell about his shaken life and make them feel what he had felt with the same acute force. He wanted to remain silent. But his old habit, inbred for years, of not

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concealing anything in the committee, overcame his doubts. All were waiting for him to say something. Paling slightly he said with his full voice:

"Arseny Ivanovich."

"Yes, my benefactor, yes?"

"Arseny Ivanovich, I want to announce—"

Arseny Ivanovich turned right round and began to nod his head with a kind, tender, urging expression on his face.

"I want to announce that I—that I—have decided to join the fighting organization."

Doctor Berg raised his narrow eyebrows and looked at him in surprise. Vera Andreyevna frowned. Zalkind blinked his inflamed eyes. There was a painful pause. Arseny Ivanovich broke the silence:

"Well? That's good—very good. Terror is necessary, and people like you are wanted for terror. I cannot disapprove of your decision—that is, of your desire—but—but, my benefactor, who of us does not want to go in for terror, does not long for it?" Arseny Ivanovich's voice suddenly shook with emotion, and his long white beard trembled. But we don't go in for it, we don't. Why, my benefactor? Because if you put too much salt into your soup, you won't eat it. Because we have taken the responsibility upon ourselves, we have taken the heavy load. Because the Party must be managed." Arseny Ivanovich sighed. "Ah, my dear Andrey Nikolayevich, your ambition is excellent, but—but listen to me, to an old man. This is not the time. One must wait, my dear man. Yes—yes—one must wait."

It was late at night. The candles were burning their last in fetid tongues of flame. Shadows were gathering in the corners, enveloping the comrades. A warm

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bluish tobacco smoke filled the air. Bolotov felt annoyed.

"Has the committee the power to prevent me? The power to say: thou shalt not kill? The power to say: thou shalt not die?"

He rose slowly, looking tall and slim, pale, with burning blue eyes, and advanced to the table covered with dying candles.

"Arseny Ivanovich, I have come to a decision on this point."

"No, no, no! What do you mean? Allow me!" Gennady Gennadievich broke in, in excitement. "What do you mean, you've come to a decision? My dear man, there are Party interests that are above yours. You have no right to come to your own decisions. It is a question that has to be discussed. How can you act that way?"

"You'll excuse me—"

"I shall not excuse you, my inestimable one, I shall not excuse you, my diamond. There can be no talk about this. Just think! The highest interests of the Party are affected! *Caveant consules.* Yes! And I tell you beforehand, I do not agree with you. You are wanted in the committee. What is it going to come to? Today *you* will leave, tomorrow Arseny Ivanovich—the next day—I. Everybody would like to go. Who will remain? No. How can you? How can you possibly?"

"I would suggest that the question be put to a vote," said Doctor Berg drily, rubbing his thin hands. "I presume you will obey the decision of the majority?" he turned to Bolotov.

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Bolotov made no reply. "Will they really put it to a vote? A vote? On what? On whether I should live or die?" The thought appeared so ridiculous and almost unseemly that he did not even feel angry. But Doctor Berg was already counting the votes.

Bolotov did not believe his own eyes. "Then the committee has really got the power to allow or to forbid? Then it's true that death and murder can be decided upon by a majority?"

Brushing aside Doctor Berg's hand, he turned on Arseny Ivanovich with an angry stare.

"You'll excuse me. I shall do as I have decided."

"Nonsense, my benefactor, nonsense," Arseny Ivanovich laughed. "Will you not obey the committee?"

"A violation of discipline entails—" Doctor Berg began didactically, but Bolotov did not wait for him to finish. Without saying another word, he strode from the room. In the empty, half-lighted hall he was joined by Gruzdiev, who was very much confused.

Bolotov turned on his heels abruptly.

"Have you cast your vote, Gruzdiev?"

"Of course. Why?"

"Nothing."

And though Gruzdiev had been silent throughout the evening and was not to be blamed for the voting, still Bolotov turned on him with sudden rage, quite unusual in him. Giving vent to all the sufferings of his dark days, he began to reproach him with hypocrisy.

"But do you—do you understand what you are saying? Do you understand what you've done? Do you understand or not? Why are our comrades dying? And you? Why are you, Gruzdiev, still alive? Who

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needs your life? And I. Why am I alive? Have I no shame? No conscience? Are you not ashamed of yourself?"

Gruzdiev shrugged his shoulders. His good, open face flushed with a sense of insult. He smiled bashfully.

"Oh, well. It's all so—" he said.

"It's all so what?"

"But terror is not the essential thing. Is it difficult to die?" He flushed a still deeper colour. "Do you believe me? Yes? Well, then, you know there is work that perhaps is still more difficult. Propaganda among peasants, among workers, among soldiers, among the masses. Isn't that necessary? Is he the only revolutionist who comes out with a book in his hands? Who is fighting at the barricades? Don't I serve the revolution? Is not my work useful? Tell me, isn't it?"

"Ah, Gruzdiev, that's not the point."

"What is? Listen, Bolotov, I'll tell you. Arseny Ivanovich is an old man. One must not be angry with him. As for Doctor Berg, oh, well, what is Doctor Berg? You know me, eh? I can't understand you. Terror is only a means, one of many good means. Glory and respect to the man who walks that road. But I don't. And shall not. You hear? I shall not do it consciously, because it does not matter whether or not one dies. What is important is how to be of the greatest use. We are so few—so few people who know what they want and know it firmly, people for whom the revolution is not merely an uprising, but a deep upheaval of ideas. And now you're leaving us. Listen, come along with me to the peasants, into the village. There you will find live work. There you won't waste your

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words." Gruzdiev was silent and looked into Bolotov's eyes with little hope. Bolotov smiled.

"You don't understand me. What you're doing is useful work. I have done it all my life. Only—"

"Only what?"

Bolotov did not answer. He raised his hand hopelessly and went slowly to his room. The committee, perplexed by his action, were still talking about him.

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CHAPTER III

VOLODYA had no success in Tver. He had decided to dynamite the railroad tracks in order to give new life to the dying uprising and to stop the Semyonov Regiment. But he could get no dynamite, and without any definite reason he returned to Moscow. The fighting squads had been defeated, the last barricade shot to pieces. On the Kudrinskaya Plaza, near bonfires, one could find the pitiful traces of the crushed uprising—burned posts, still smoky, upturned fences, barrels, boards, window frames. Priesna Street was occupied by the army, in Gruziny Street the artillery was still shooting, and at the Strastny Monastery concierges were exhibiting the traces of rifle shots to merchants. Volodya understood that the battle had been lost, and he left the same evening for St. Petersburg.

The Moscow failure made him feel indignant. Faintheartedness seemed to him to be the cause of it. He was indignant at Zalkind because he had refused money, at Arseny Ivanovich because he had not supplied ammunition, at Doctor Berg because he had not organized Party troops. He accused the committee of disgraceful aloofness, the Party of negligence. He believed sincerely that the workmen could have won St. Petersburg, but that the comrades had become frightened. If Seriozha, he thought, had been furnished with five kilograms of dynamite, he would have taken possession of Moscow, and had other people, more farsighted and daring, been

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in charge of affairs, instead of Arseny Ivanovich, or Doctor Berg, or Vera Andreyevna, the fate of Russia would have been changed. He was incapable of perceiving that the success of the uprising did not depend on their conscious will and that every member of the Party was right in his own fashion. Pronka was right in dying at the barricades; Vanya was right in throwing the bomb; Berg was right in caring for the committee; Bolotov was right in defending Moscow. Every one did what he could and should have done in accordance with his ability. And if their weak powers were not sufficient, if the uprising was crushed, it was not the fault of individuals, not the fault of Bolotov, or Berg, or Arseny Ivanovich. But Volodya did not see this. In his indignation over the painful defeat, in his conviction that the committee was guilty, in his anger over the futile sacrifice, he bitterly repented his credulity. He did not go to the convention. Party conventions, conferences and councils seemed a useless pastime, the prattling of the idle "intelligentzia." He had long since solved all problems. He thought there was nothing to talk about, nothing to decide, no time to hesitate. He felt it was time to take revenge, not to babble, also that the revolution was bound by no laws, that terror was no crime, and that one man had an undeniable right over the life of another, just as he, Volodya, had the power over his squad of men. And like Bolotov he was oppressed heavily by a feeling of lonesomeness.

"Cowards! Miserable cowards!" he kept repeating through his teeth, as he walked along the Izmailovsky Prospect. A fresh wind was blowing from the sea, a light mist was falling. The thin snow was melting. The copper column of Victory receded in the misty fog.

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It was not yet four in the afternoon, but the electric lights were already turned on. Volodya, with his black curly head stuck into his coat collar, was hurrying along the slippery sidewalk. In the Fifth Section of the city, in a "secret" lodging selected by him, lived Olga, his comrade and friend; and as he neared the place, his thoughts quieted down. He was now thinking of Olga, of her knowing eyes, of how in ten minutes he would hear her friendly voice, would press her beloved hands. He had come to St. Petersburg for Seriozha, for Vanya and Konstantin, but he could not explain why he had not gone directly from the railroad station to the Party quarters. And had anybody suspected him of being in love, he would have laughed in disdain.

He located the familiar gloomy five-story house, crossed the dirty yard, and walked up the stairs. Olga, a tall woman with smoothly combed hair and clad in a simple black dress, opened the door herself. Although they had not seen each other for a whole month and she had been waiting and weeping for him and worrying for his life, they met as if they had parted only the day before.

Volodya, enormously tall and broad-shouldered, sat down on the couch, without even greeting her or taking off his coat.

"Olga."

"What?"

"Olga."

"What, dear?"

"Olga, what is to be done now?"

Olga cast her eyes down. He shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"What do you think, Olga?"

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"What do I think?"

"Oh, my God, don't drawl."

Her round, almost elderly face suddenly became cold and unpleasant.

"Volodya, this is what I say. You ask me what is to be done. I don't know what is to be done. But listen, there are people—they are the great majority. They don't do anything, they don't dare to do anything, they don't understand anything, they despair at misfortune —weak children—"

"Well?"

"Well, and then there are others—"

She suddenly leaned towards him and embraced his neck with an elastic, almost cat-like motion.

"Listen, Volodya, tell me. If a man has resolved on everything, if he has borne everything, has understood everything, has gone through everything, if he has looked down into the deepest of the deep, into the black abyss, into the horrifying darkness, and if he has felt no terror, if he has looked into it all and felt no dizziness, tell me, do you think he is like all the rest? Is he a weak child? Or has he, perhaps, a power over people? A power over life and death?"

Volodya looked at her perplexed, not understanding what she meant. She pressed him softly to her breast, and her knowing grey eyes became attractively and unusually near. He sighed.

"One must not fear, beloved. To a man like that all is permissible. You hear, all. For him there is no sin, no forbidden thing, no crime. Only one must be daring. People tell lies and then are afraid. People say blood and are afraid of blood. People are afraid of words. Let there be an abyss below, but is there no abyss above?

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Happy is the one who has come to know both. I think that is the way it is. Here we have resolved on something great, on something terrifying, and how terrifying! We have resolved on terror, on murder, on death! One who can stand it all, shall stand it. And he shall stand lies, and blood, and his own suffering. And one who can't, shall—he shall perish, of course. And so he should!" she ended harshly, with contempt in her voice.

Volodya scarcely listened to her. Because of her nearness, and because her tresses were falling in disorder, and the lamp was burning with a dim light from under the shade, and because of the quiet in the room, he did not feel big and strong, the famous Volodya, but like a small boy being petted. Guessing this feeling of his, Olga whispered in his ear:

"Beloved, how tired you are!"

And as soon as she had said it, Volodya for the first time in many months understood how utterly exhausted he was, exhausted by his homeless life, by the bitter struggle. He closed his eyes, lowered his head with its long thick hair and, forgetting about the Party, the fighting squad, the revolution, and even Olga, he gradually relaxed into a short but well-deserved restfulness, where there was no life, no blood, no death, no barricades, no terror, no gendarmes and no committee, but only a dark, blissful, boundless feeling of repose. Olga looked smilingly into his face. Unkempt and unwashed as he was, with pockmarks on his face and a long, curly beard, he seemed attractive and handsome to her. He did not rest for long. As if in slumber, he shook his hair and repeated his question:

"Then what is to be done now?"

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"What's to be done now?" Olga raised her brows in discontent. "I am not the one to decide that, Volodya, but you."

Volodya remained silent, fingering his cigarette.

"Listen, Olga," he began at last. "This is all nonsense. I'm no philosopher. I don't know any abysses. But I do know that I can't reconcile myself to it. No, I can't. I hate them. You understand, I hate them. There are two roads. One is with the Party, with Doctor Berg, the road of conventions, statutes, programs, committees, and red tape, the devil take it! That's the road I have been walking. Where has it brought me to? The uprising is crushed, terror is at a standstill. Perhaps the Party is growing, but the revolution is dying, yes, dying. But there is another road, Olga. Listen to me, Olga. War should be war. You understand? I've made up my mind. I may be alone today. Tomorrow we shall be many. I don't want any white hands, any good advice. I don't want any threats on paper. I can't and I won't forgive—"

He pushed her hand away and got up. He was no longer tired. He felt that exciting, nervous resolve which had been aroused in him in the house of Sliozkin and which had later sent him to Tver in search of dynamite. Now it seemed to him that there was no death-sentence, no sacrifice, no suffering that could hold him back. It also seemed to him that such was the divine will of the people, that it was only he, the revolutionist Gliebov, who was uttering those exalted words, and his mouth was expressing the will of the people, the poverty-stricken, humble, liberty-loving, awe-inspiring Russian people.

"And money?"

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"What money? What is money? The committee will give money."

Olga shook her head thoughtfully.

"The committee will not give any money."

"It won't? All right, the devil take them!" Volodya brought his fist down on the table. "I will find money! I will."

"But where, Volodya?"

"Where? If you have no money—kill! I'll get millions! I will open the gratings of the banks, I will break iron chests! With weapons in my hands I will obtain money. You hear? Will you believe me? What does the Berg committee mean to me? I can battle all alone in a field. Oh, they shall get their deserts. The nobles' nests shall be set aflame! They'll know Stepan Timofeyevich! Indeed they will!"

Bearded, curly-headed and black, with eyes sparkling like fire, Volodya stood before her, stretched to his full enormous height. She looked straight into his eyes with her own eyes full of pride and exaltation. She had faith that he would do as he said. She had faith that his will was an indomitable will like hers. There was no need of the Bolotovs, the Bergs, the Zalkinds and the old weaklings. There was no need of the slow, deliberative, calculating Party. All was permissible! All! For the good of the people there was no hesitation, no lawlessness! And he, her black knight Volodya, was the ruling leader. He would show the people the road to liberty, he would save perishing Russia. Full of happiness, with burning cheeks, she clung to him silently.

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CHAPTER IV

VOLODYA located the committee and informed them of his decision. The persuasions, the pleadings, even tears of Arseny Ivanovich were of no avail. Volodya left for the South; from the South he went to the Volga, and two months later he was at the head of a newly organized "iron" fighting squad. Seriozha and Vanya did not join him. They categorically refused to leave the Party. Bolotov also refused, though Volodya pressed him urgently. However, he gained a new recruit in a notorious St. Petersburg student, who had been expelled from the university for participating in the revolution.

Ruvim Epstein considered himself a very talented scholar. He criticized the platform adopted at the general Party convention passionately and, as he thought, scientifically. He believed that its unfortunate mistakes mutilated the whole significance of the revolution. A democratic republic in his opinion, was an obsolete half-measure; the Party should renounce its advocacy of any form of government, and should demand the institution of free anarchist communes; with this great goal in view all means were permissible, and he advised the robbing of merchants, the burning of the landed estates, and expropriation of private property in favour of the people. The most dangerous enemy of the revolution, he asserted, was not the government, but the "bourgeoisie." So, the "contemptible bourgeois" should not be spared.

Epstein's dark-blue eyeglasses and pale, greenish

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cheeks could be seen at all gatherings, meetings and conferences. He spoke fluently, debated hotly, and invariably closed his speeches with a thunderous "call to arms." When he heard that the famous Volodya had thrown over the committee, he went to him full of joy and tried to persuade him to enlarge his squad, so as to create an aggressive, "really revolutionary" Party. He explained the details of his scientifically constructed program and the workings of his faultless plan of battle. Volodya yawned, looked at his weak hands and flat chest, listened indifferently to his harsh voice—Epstein delighted in the sound of his own voice—and waited patiently for the end of his school-boy speech.

"A woodcock is not big, but he makes a big noise," Volodya decided to himself. But because Epstein expressed familiar thoughts and could "wag his tongue," and, consequently, defend the "platform" of the fighting squad when necessary, Volodya accepted him. Epstein was happy. He thought Volodya shared his extreme convictions, and a new shining page would be written into the history of the old, hackneyed, heretical revolution by the entrance of a new party built according to his theory, a party that undoubtedly would march to victory.

Volodya had faith in his own star. He felt an abundant source of unspent forces in himself, forces of daring, hate, inspiration and faith, and never doubted that the lonely road he had chosen was prudent and inevitable. But after he had laboured two months to create a strong organization and was preparing for the first action—a big and difficult "expropriation"—he began to experience occasional fears that the first undertaking might be a defeat. While a member of the Party he

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had had no such anxieties. Hundreds of comrades were there ready to take up the work where he had left off; no matter that those comrades were Doctor Bergs, so long as the seed, once sown, would not die, and the field would bring a harvest. But now as he looked at his rebellious "fighters"—at Epstein, Konstantin, the gymnasiast Mitya, the blacksmith Prokhor, the clerk Yelizar, all the people who had been attracted by his daring, he perceived to his sorrow that should he hang tomorrow, there would be no one to take his place at the steering-wheel. He tried to stifle these thoughts, in an effort to convince himself that there could be no defeat, and he listened eagerly to Olga's inspiring words, but he could not kill the anxiety in his heart.

In Odessa there was much talk about a revolutionist, "The Fly," a sailor who had deserted and who had experienced solitary confinement. After some hesitation Volodya decided to meet him. He had furtive hopes that he would finally find a worthy friend. The meeting was to take place in Moscow. He gathered together his men, who had been scattered all over Russia, into Tver, told them to await his return and, without asking Olga's advice, left for Moscow, which was already quiet.

In Sokolniki the scent of spring was in the air. The white snow was swelling and melting, laying the ground bare. The soft, damp, black spots seemed to be drained by the thirst of coming spring. In the air, which was still cold, but fragrant, the sparrows were twittering festively. The Fly, a young chap of about thirty, slender and well-built, as if cast in steel, with a pewter ring in his ear, was walking slowly and swinging slightly on his strong legs. Volodya, who looked even heavier and clumsier beside of him, was splashing along in

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the melting snow, watching his companion with sidewise glances. The Fly was relating the story of his life. He spoke quickly and easily, obviously showing off an artificial indifference. He looked upon Volodya as upon a daring chieftain, a hunter after wild game.

"And I began to live quietly. I had a little house, a wife. But soon I began to notice—my wife, my better half, so to say—excuse me—sh-sh-sh—with mister village inspector. And it was hard to make out whether it was anything political, or purely amorous. Well, I did not wait too long. What for? It was in the autumn. A dark night. Pitch dark. I took my double-barrelled gun down from the nail and went out into the street. It was dark in the street, lights in the windows. My wife was sitting inside, sewing on a Singer sewing-machine. There was a lamp on the table near her, and I could see her very plainly. Well, with God's blessing, I raised the gun to my shoulder, aimed, stood still a moment. One, two. The bullet hit her right on this spot." He pointed to just above his temple.

"Did you kill her?"

"Exactly. I killed her."

Volodya frowned.

"And why were you assigned to the disciplinary battalion?" he asked a moment later.

"To the disciplinary?"

"Yes."

"I struck the quartermaster in a fit of rage," the Fly answered with contempt, spat out, and lighted a cigarette. A thin ring of smoke curled up into the blue air.

"Well?"

"What is it?"

"Go on."

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"What's to go on about, Vladimir Ivanovich? My tale is short, but the rope is long. Well, if you want to know, I was flogged, in the disciplinary—by our merciful officials. That's what I was."

"Flogged?"

"Certainly. Twice."

"For what?"

"For tobacco—smoking cigarettes contrary to rules."

"And you?"

"I? What about me?" The Fly smiled, exposing his milk-white teeth. His sharp face, with a nose like a vulture's, became still sharper. In his narrow hazel eyes rapid fires flashed up and died down. "I suppose, I paid them back for it. I guess they haven't forgotten me yet."

"Did you kill?

"Exactly. Killed. His Excellency, the commander of the battalion." He threw away the butt. "Well, then I began to lead an underground life. With the committee, excuse me, I was not on good terms. 'You're a murderer,' they said. That is, the noble gentlemen of the district committee, the students, said so. 'Exactly, I replied, a murderer.' 'We don't want men like you.' 'Just as you please,' I said. 'I'm not very keen on men like you.' And I left them." He smiled again. "Permit me another smoke."

While he was lighting the cigarette, Volodya looked at him curiously, at his sheepskin cap pulled to one side, his short fur jacket, and the swift, rounded motions of his small hands.

"Do you drink?" Volodya asked suddenly.

"Yes, sir. I drink," the Fly answered unhesitatingly, raising his eyes.

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Volodya remained silent a while.

"Well?"

"Well, one can't tell everything. I went away. Lived in Odessa. Once I found out that the owner of a tobacco store, Mikhail Efimovich Zhizhin was a spy. 'Oh, you, scoundrel!' I thought. 'You just wait.' I picked after dinner, when he would take a nap. And then I went there. To the store, I mean. His wife came out. 'Let me have Golubka cigarettes for five,' I said. 'We have no Golubka,' she said. 'How's that? Impossible. I just bought some here. Look and see if you can't find them.' She began to hunt. 'No,' she said, 'I can't find any.' 'Wake your husband up, then.' She went behind the partition, and I locked the door. The store-keeper came out. 'You want Golubka?' he said. 'Yes, Golubka, please.' He turned his back and began to search over the shelves. I took my revolver out. I had a government model. One—two. Very simple—"

"You killed him?"

"Exactly."

"And then—"

"And then? Then I went after the spies."

"The spies?"

"Exactly. I mean the secret service agents."

"And did you get many of them?"

"About eight, maybe more."

"Nothing but spies?"

The Fly winced and shook his head.

"There were all sorts—"

"Go on, tell me."

"No, what for? I'm not at a confession, Vladimir Ivanovich. What's the use of recalling the past? And

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what's the difference? They're all the same. A gendarme, a merchant, a landowner. What's the difference? That's my opinion. And yours?" He looked at Volodya with a bold, ironical expression in his eyes.

Volodya made no answer. The Fly stuck his hand carelessly into his pocket and, after waiting a while for an answer, continued:

"Then there were the wine shops. They give a lot of trouble."

"Did you rob them alone?"

"No. Not alone. I had comrades. But it's not worth talking about. What sort of business is it? It's mere play. Dirty work. It soils one's hands."

"What did you do with the money?"

"Money? There wasn't much of it. And must I live or no? What do you think?" he added, laughing derisively. "I used to give it to the Party."

Volodya hadn't the least doubt the Fly was lying and had never given a kopek to the Party. But he kept silent. The Fly looked at him sidewise.

"Let's sit down a while, Vladimir Ivanovich."

They seated themselves on a damp cold stump. The Fly was lazily rolling a cigarette.

"A murderer, a real murderer," Volodya thought. "But oh, well, I mustn't be too long choosing. I certainly couldn't cook a meal with Berg. Supposing he is a murderer, at least he won't betray." Water was noisily dropping from the naked branches. The Fly threw his head up and sat for a long while lost in thought, looking up with half-closed eyes at the transparent clouds. Suddenly he heaved a deep sigh.

"It's fine, Vladimir Ivanovich."

"What's fine?"

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"The Spring."

When an hour later they were bidding each other good-bye at the Triumphal Gates, the Fly held on to Volodya's hand, pressed it hard, and said:

"Vladimir Ivanovich?"

"What?"

"Let me go with you."

"With me?" Volodya hesitated, not knowing why.

"Yes. I want to join you. I'm bored to death tramping around the world. Please do take me."

"You may be the leader of the gang, but you're just as much of a murderer as I am," said his mocking eyes.

Volodya understood him. A flush of anger coloured his cheeks. He wanted to withdraw his hand, but instantly changed his mind.

"Well, after all, what is there to spit upon? War is over. 'Love us even if we are black.' He is right," Volodya thought, and gained control over himself. He ordered the Fly to go to Tver.

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CHAPTER V

TOWARD the end of the following February the fighting squad grew and gained in strength. Volodya decided to make a terrorist attempt. There was a choice of two undertakings. One of his men, Mitya, a student who had been expelled from the gymnasium, the son of a banker, informed him that on Saturday, the second of April, five hundred thousand rubles of government money would be delivered from the vaults of the bank to the Warsaw railroad station. Mitya furnished complete details of the size of the Cossack guard and the route the government coach would take. Volodya was dazed by the boldness of the plan. He did not doubt that one well-thrown bomb would be sufficient, but the bomb had to be thrown in broad daylight in a St. Petersburg street. That meant that it would be difficult, almost impossible, to avoid victims.

The other undertaking would be much simpler, but the money to be gained was scarcely worth the effort, only twenty thousand rubles belonging to the merchants Voronin, whose office was in Moscow near the Khopilovsky Pond. Volodya was told of this "beggarly" chance by Yelizar, a clerk in the Voronin factory. The Khopilovsky "kopeks" tempted Volodya. On the deserted outskirts of Moscow the squad could retire without losing a single man. The one drawback was that the first enterprise, as Volodya saw it, was nothing more than a plain, unadorned robbery. Since he had placed

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himself at the head of a terrorist band and had become master with dictatorial powers, a change had taken place in him. His belief had not changed, that in the name of the people everything was permissible, and he agreed as he always had, with Epstein, that the merchants should be robbed and the landed estates destroyed. But a deep-seated, latent instinct, an indefinable feeling of responsibility, restrained him from rash measures. He became cautious, weighed every word, looked over every plan time and again, and sometimes glancing at the Fly's hawk-like face, he would be seized by a strange fear.

He changed also in his relations to the Party committee. Arseny Ivanovich's senility, Doctor Berg's frugality, Vera Andreyevna's lack of ability, he fully appreciated were merely petty, transient trifles, and the committee members really deserved credit for their immemorial services, their shouldering of the responsibility for the Party. In the past, when fighting at the barricades, when arresting Colonel Sliozkin, and when planning to blow up the Semyonov Regiment, Volodya had naïvely thought that as a soldier he was not responsible for the shedding of blood. The whole Party was accountable, the whole revolution, every one who shared his conviction. To his surprise he saw that his break with the committee had brought him nearer to it, nearer to its organization and interest, and had filled him with a sense of duty to the squad of which he was leader. And he who never hesitated was now uncertain, unable to decide how to act. From this difficulty he was rescued by Olga. She said that to sacrifice human lives in St. Petersburg for the sake of a brilliant, profitable act, was no mistake but an enviable deed and an

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honourable one; and should he rob the Voronin office, he would soon after, willy-nilly, decide upon a larger "expropriation." Her arguments persuaded Volodya. He called his men to St. Petersburg, detailed Prokhor and Yelizar to buy horses and wagons and began to make ready for the attempt.

Two days before the second of April he made an appointment to meet Epstein at Olga's room, and also a comrade and assistant of his whom he jokingly called "Chief of Staff," a student of engineering, Herman Freze, the son of a Baltic landowner, who had been about to graduate from the Institute when to the horror of his parents he suddenly disappeared from St. Petersburg. He came to Volodya and asked to be accepted for the fighting squad. He did not go to the committee, or to Bolotov, or Arseny Ivanovich, but to Vladimir Gliebov, because he had decided in cold blood as he thought, that it was worth while to risk his life only for something big, something really useful to the revolution. Like Epstein, he had a blind faith in terror, and believed that the bourgeoisie could be frightened by bombs. He knew Bakunin by heart, but did not like to voice his opinions. He himself could hardly tell by which highways and byways he had come to irreconcilable anarchism, why he, a man of independent means, had conceived such a hatred for the bourgeoisie. He really hated it, was really ready to die for his unwritten symbol of faith. He was a silent German, correctly dressed to the minutest detail. He had a long pale face and sharply chiselled chin. Judging by his student uniform, his gold rings, and his correctly parted hair, nobody would have dreamed that he believed firmly in expropriation and terrorism.

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Always prompt, he arrived at the same time as Epstein, before Volodya. Taking off his hat and gloves, without seeming to pay any attention to Olga, he unrolled a complete map of St. Petersburg. Olga, her face propped on her fists, and leaning against the table, looked at Freze in silence a few minutes. From the very first days, there had been established a peculiar, half comradely, half tender relationship between her and the men. Epstein, Mitya, Konstantin, Prokhor, Yelizar, even the Fly felt pleased that among them, in the squad, was a young woman with a strong body and womanly face, who was their comrade and friend. In her presence, even when she was silent, they felt cheerier and more at ease, and were no longer haunted by the fear of being hanged.

Freze, conscious of her keen, fixed glance, which he thought was full of meaning, today also felt this joy that she stirred in them.

"Frezushka, aren't you afraid?" asked Olga smilingly, without taking her eyes from his thin face.

Freze raised his eyes and wrinkled his white forehead, from which the hair was beginning to recede. He wanted to answer truthfully and precisely, as truthfully and precisely as he was accustomed to answer not only Olga, but every one, whatever the question.

"Afraid of what, Olga Vasilyevna?" he said, with but a slight accent, after a little pause, as she slowly poured a glass of tea for him.

"If you ask me whether I am afraid for my life, I will tell you no. I am not, not in the least. But if you mean that the thing for which I fear is the success of our enterprise, then I must answer yes, I am afraid."

Olga sighed.

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"Oh, you Frezushka, Frezushka, always with your 'if' and 'about that.' Everything so carefully thought out and sensible, so German! But I am a Russian, I am not afraid of anything." She laughed but only with her eyes. "You know," she lowered her voice, "I was trying to tell fortunes today. I spread the cards and it came out that everybody would be wonderful. You don't believe it, do you?"

"I don't believe in fortune-telling," answered Freze, seriously, without smiling. Though Freze and Epstein and even Olga herself knew that what she said was ridiculous, still they liked it, so anxious were they to believe in their success.

"You don't believe in it, but I do," Olga sang out. "You know, Frezushka, what I wanted to ask you." Her face grew cold and ugly, as when she spoke to Volodya. "Is it permissible, in your opinion, to join the secret service, or is it not?"

Freze wrinkled his forehead again and looked at her in astonishment, with his short-sighted, protruding eyes. Convinced that this time Olga was not joking, he asked slowly, as if to make sure:

"Join the secret service?"

"Yes. Why are you so scared?"

"I don't quite understand. What do you mean, join the secret service?"

"Oh, my God, just that. It's very simple. Epstein says it is permissible for the furthering of terror."

Epstein, gloomy and vexed with Olga, because she was not talking to him, began to speak loudly and angrily:

"A man was asked, 'What do you do with money?' He answered, 'I divide it in three parts. One third I lock up in my trunk; one third I bury in the ground,

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and one third I permit to circulate.' Well, we too, have only a third in circulation. Why may they deceive us and not we them? Why should we allow others to shear us like sheep? I ask you, for the sake of terror everything is permissible, isn't it? Do you agree? You may also agree that everything beneficial to the revolution is good, and harmful to it is bad? Isn't that so? Well, I say the only question is, whether there is any advantage to be gained or not. Is there any advantage if you bury your money in the ground? Is there a doubt about it? Is it not clear that if you or I were active in the secret service we should know everything that is going on there? Well, then, is it clear? Is it?" He finished like a teacher speaking to stupid, indifferent pupils, to whom the simplest things have to be repeated.

Freze, tall and severe in his student uniform, sat upright, motionless, glancing from Epstein to Olga, with a look of perplexity, as though not trusting his ears. Olga's rounded face was calm and wore a thoughtful smile.

"For the sake of the revolution?" Freze finally came to himself. "It is funny; for the sake of the revolution, of course; could there be any other reason?"

Epstein became excited.

"Is it necessary to make terror or not? It's only silly people say, this is not allowed, that must not be done, this is not good, that is bad, this is immoral. What does it all mean? Just talk! I am a free human being, I don't recognize any authority, and I repeat, why should we allow ourselves to be sheared like sheep?"

"I never thought of that before," said Freze, hesitating and drawling. "But it seems to me you are wrong. If a man enters the secret service—"

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"Again if," Olga interrupted jokingly. "In my opinion, it is permissible. But not for everybody. No, it isn't everybody that can do it. You can't. But there are some who can," she ended smiling shrewdly and avoiding Freze's eyes.

"What can one do?"

On the threshold stood Volodya, big and black in his fur coat. Freze breathed more freely, as if Volodya had just saved him from danger.

"I mean," said Epstein, becoming confused, "that for the benefit of terror, it is right to join the secret service."

Volodya contracted his brows gloomily.

"What?"

"I agree with Kletochnikov—"

"Beginning his nonsense already!" Volodya jerked his head angrily. Turning to Freze he asked:

"Have you seen Yelizar?"

"I have."

"And the bombs?"

"The bombs are ready."

"And the Mausers?"

"They all have Mausers."

Volodya nodded his head. He was sure of success now. What gave him this confidence he could not tell, but somehow during the last troublesome days a feeling of joy—a feeling that defeat was impossible had arisen in him. Never before, whether on the barricades at Moscow, or organizing his squad, or breaking with the Party committee, had he been so conscious of overflowing vigour. It was as if the muscles of his massive body had all hardened and strengthened and become more flexible. He knew the face of things had not changed—the same Konstantin, the Fly, Mitya, Prokhor, Epstein

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would go out armed the next day. It would be just as difficult as it had always been to lift money in the St. Petersburg streets, and it was just as easy as it had always been for his squad and himself to be ruined without resulting gain. Yet he felt no fear. He smiled at Freze.

"Freze has provided for every contingency, and has verified everything. He has not forgotten a single detail. He is not a mere man, he is pure white and gold," Volodya thought.

Freze, his close-cropped head bent over a map, was making careful calculations with a compass.

"Great Podyacheskaya, a hundred feet wide; Tomalovsky, two hundred and twenty-five feet. The shortest distance from Kriukov Canal to Podyacheskaya Street, through Sadovaya Street. That means that Prokhor ought to stand at Sadovaya Street with the cab and Yelizar on Nikolsky Street. Do you hear me, Vladimir Ivanovich? The first bomb thrower, Konstantin, is to meet the coach behind the Ekaterinovsky Prospect. The second bomb thrower, Mitya, is to stand thirty feet away from him. Isn't that so, Vladimir Ivanovich?"

They all listened attentively. It was so quiet, so peaceful in the room. The clock struck as usual. And Freze spoke with such certainty that the matter might have been some trifling, everyday event. To judge by Volodya's broad back, or Epstein's dark glasses, or Olga's feminine face, or the polish of the swift compass, nobody would have had the faintest suspicion that Volodya, Freze, Epstein, Olga might kill the next day, or that all of them might perish. Not one of them, to be sure, was thinking of death. Everything had been de-

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cided and settled, they felt. Killing was permissible, and the only question was, who would be victorious. For the sake of victory, each of them was ready to give his life without hesitation.

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CHAPTER VI

ON the second of April, Volodya went out on the street at seven o'clock in the morning. Prokhor was to await him at Fontanka Street. The day was coming to life. A steamer tooted mournfully on the Neva, the first tram-cars clanged by, the sidewalks were deserted, and the stores closed.

Walking along the Nevsky Prospect, still lifeless, Volodya felt as though there would not be any assault, the money would not be transported, Konstantin would miss the coach, Mitya's bomb would not explode, and the whole carefully worked-out plan was merely a boyish prank. This uneasy feeling, hitherto unknown to him, was so strong that he could scarcely realize that that very day, near that very spot, the solemn, dreadful thing he so audaciously desired was to be enacted.

He walked slowly, idly, as if out for a stroll, and almost in a trance. He reached Fontanka Street, and did not notice when he turned toward the river. From the crystalline sheen of the water, it was borne upon him that it was a clear sunny spring day. It grew warm. He unbuttoned his heavy coat and began to look around indifferently in search of the cab. When he finally discerned it, he could hardly believe that that stout coachman, all tidied up, was the same Prokhor he had known in the Ural and had brought along to St. Petersburg.

"Why is he here? Nothing will come of this," he thought superstitiously.

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Prokhor stood in his blue cloak with his back turned to Volodya dusting the sledge sheet. His dappled grey thoroughbred was snorting and pricking his ears as if in alarm. Volodya knew the horse. He and Prokhor had selected it at the horse-market Konnaya. It was fit to carry off the stakes as a racer.

"Driver!"

"Here, gentleman, a playful one." Volodya drew near to Prokhor and looked straight into his face. He noticed the bright concerned eyes of a peasant and a hesitant smile, and knew Prokhor was afraid. He himself now was set at rest, as he was in Olga's house. It was useless to doubt, Freze had not worked in vain, Prokhor was not a whirlwind driver for nothing, the bombs were prepared, and the Mausers distributed, and now it was too late for hesitation. He sighed deeply from the fulness of his heart.

"Olga will soon be here. Don't miss her."

Prokhor did not answer. Volodya took out his watch. Long after he remembered that the sun had sparkled like gold on the glass. It was a quarter past seven. Calculating his time he turned to the Kriukov Canal. Now, after the meeting with Prokhor, he rejoiced to find a headstrong determination taking possession of him. He knew the feeling. In such moments he feared nobody, and success always followed. Quickening his pace, afraid of arriving too late, he went to Podyacheskaya Street. At the open town-tavern, on the sidewalk under the lantern, he noticed one of the bomb throwers, Konstantin. The freckled, red-haired lad stood motionless in his officer's black mantle, as if on duty. Volodya went forward, but only five steps, when behind him horseshoes clanged repeatedly and loudly, and before the set time

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he caught sight of the bank coach. Volodya remembered it well: the dark sorrel horses, the driver with his large, bushy beard, and, beside him, the saintly faced bank messenger.

On each side close to the wheels, raised a little in their saddles, jogged the Cossacks. There were six of them. Volodya stopped. He could not see Konstantin. The coach hid him. But he knew Konstantin was there at the tavern door, with the bomb in his hand. And not by knowledge, nor reasoning, nor feeling, but by intuition sharp and sure felt by the whole of his tense body, Volodya perceived that now, half a minute later, there on Podyacheskaya Street, there would occur that for which he dared not hope.

For one second, for one painfully long moment, he felt afraid. He wished the assault would not occur, that Konstantin would spare the coach, and everything would go on today as it had yesterday. But now, amid the tranquillity of the street, amid the peaceful clatter of horses' hoofs, which disturbed the stillness of the morning, rang out an immense, deafening explosion. Something was being thrown with a report more violent than the boom of cannon or a peal of thunder. From the earth a yellow column, black at its upper end, rose and spread in a brown haze, reaching the roofs and filling the whole street with the acrid odour of smoke. The pillar spread so swiftly, so suddenly and reached such heights, the rumbling was so loud, the sidewalks quaked so violently, and there was such a crash of glass that Volodya had to hold his breath. But gaining control over himself, he ran to Konstantin.

While he was running, he noticed Epstein on the other side of the deserted sidewalk, running from the coach,

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not to it. Epstein was in a long torn coat and without his hat and glasses. He was pale and waved his hands agitatedly. Afraid that the coach would start again and the escort would defend the money by arms and still not believing that the thing had been done, Volodya, pale as a sheet, stopped at the spot where the explosion had taken place. The bloody horses entangled in the ruins were struggling feebly on the sidewalk. One of them, scarcely more than a colt, had its rump half torn through and its flesh burned. It fell down on the stones convulsed, its sides heaving. The other, trying to rise and falling back, stretched its long neck and made efforts to get to its knees. The blood was running in hot streams from its belly. The coach remained undamaged. The driver was gone. To the left about ten feet away lay a killed Cossack. He had on a grey cloak and patched blue breeches. His firm, sunburned face framed in a little dark beard was as calm as though he had been caught unawares and had had no time to grasp what had happened. All round lay pieces of cloaks, splinters of glass, broken shafts, a ripped-up saddle, and something else wet and large. Without looking around Volodya pulled open the carriage door. In the corner among the canvas sacks piled up to the top sat a bank messenger, a young man of about twenty-five with a small dark moustache. He was sitting as if nailed to the cushioned seat. He looked at Volodya with frightened, pitiful, uncomprehending eyes. "There is the money," flashed through Volodya's mind. He seized one of the bags and flung it on the ground. At that instant he heard the short report of a shot back of him, at his very cheek, burning and deafening him. Volodya turned round frightened. The Fly, with a rapacious face like a

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hawk's, his thin lips compressed, shot at the bank messenger at very close range. The carriage filled with smoke. "What's he doing that for?" thought Volodya. The messenger did not budge. Only his head with the caracal cap dropped on his chest. Volodya and the Fly threw out the bags silently, jostling each other in their haste and clumsily bumping against the messenger. There were ten bags. One bulky one, evidently filled with silver and copper coins, they left on the seat. When they had thrown out the last bag, Volodya looked around. There were no police. Prokhor's dappled grey was galloping away at full speed down Podyacheskaya Street, and from behind the top of the cab a lady's hat showed. It was Olga, Volodya knew, Olga carrying away the money. "Thank God," he thought, "thank God." Two persons were running toward Fontanka Street. Volodya recognized Freze and Mitya by their gait. The Fly, his face distorted and evil-looking, seized Volodya by the shoulders.

"Go away, Vladimir Ivanovich," he said.

Volodya turned obediently after him. But now he noticed something he had not observed before. Within a few feet of them, on the dusty sidewalk, almost at the door of the saloon, Konstantin was resting, leaning the back of his head against the cast-iron lantern. His round, freckled face, always so full of colour and so alert, now looked bluish grey. His eyes were muddy. His cap lay on the sidewalk. Konstantin had been wounded by his own bomb.

"Go away," repeated the Fly.

Volodya pushed him away violently and went up to Konstantin with firm steps. He bent over him. His white chest was uncovered, and his eyes stared vacantly.

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"Killed," thought Volodya, but Konstantin, with a great effort, slowly raised his eyes and sighed deeply. Volodya bent closer to him. And there, after the successful assault, amidst shattered bodies and wounded horses, over the dying Konstantin, he suddenly felt a pain convulsing his throat and his eyes moistening with tears for the first time in his life. He intended to leave, but from behind him issued a loud, shrill cry:

"Stop! Stop!"

The next instant strong hands were seizing Volodya. His life was in danger. At the realization of this, his wonted stern determination came to him again. No one would dare to arrest him, Vladimir Gliebov. Squaring his massive shoulders and with muscles taut, he made a dash forward. On his strength depended his safety, and with no doubts in his soul as to his ultimate safety, he took out his revolver. He did not see Konstantin, or the Cossacks, or the panting horses on the sidewalk. All he saw was unknown men in short fur coats who were retreating and moving backward toward the wall. He was sure the comrades had gone and he could not expect help. But this did not make him afraid.

For some reason he was specially interested in a particular man among his pursuers, a fat flour-dealer with a scared lymphatic face and clipped military moustache. Biting his underlip Volodya, long bearded and massive with his head lowered like an enraged bull, fired at him almost mechanically without taking aim. The man rushed forward, bent backward and fell to the ground. But the police were already coming up, their whistles were blowing, the Cossacks were galloping close, and a minute later an unbroken chain of steel surrounded Volodya. Afterwards, he, himself, was hardly able to

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tell how he escaped from the circle. He remembered that he ran, ran as never before in his life, and that his pursuers were overtaking him. He knew that at Nikolsky Street Yelizar ought to be waiting for him with a horse and carriage. Without admitting it to himself, Volodya hoped Yelizar was still there. At the half-open gates he met a porter in a cap and a white apron who tried to bar his way with outstretched arms. Volodya did not lose his presence of mind. Not looking at the porter, but circling around him, he fired twice. The porter fell. Afterward Volodya as in a dream saw Yelizar's frightened face and the black horse. He saw Yelizar grasp the revolver and heard a report. Then came the jogging of the carriage and the gleam of a street-lamp, and the houses began to flash by. It was not until they reached the Nevsky and the exhausted thoroughbred, snorting and foaming, slackened his mad pace that Volodya realized that Yelizar had saved his life.

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CHAPTER VII

WITHOUT awaiting the closing of the convention Bolotov left secretly for St. Petersburg, taking a roundabout route through Gatchina. In St. Petersburg he sent a code message to Arkady Rosenstern for an appointment with him at Ikonikov, the lawyer's house on Sergeyevsky Street. He looked forward to the meeting with impatience. Rosenstern, who had already been an active terrorist, would understand and approve of his course, and help him with advice.

Ikonikov, fat and bald, with a weary, smooth-shaven face and blue veins webbing his cheeks, received Bolotov like an old acquaintance.

"I am very glad, very glad indeed. Are you still in good health? Arkady Borisovich has not yet come. I hope, my dear sir, you will dine with me? He spoke in a hoarse, short-breathed voice, grasping Bolotov's hands. "News flies quickly," he said lowering his voice. "Rumours are afloat that you performed wonders at the barricade. You deserve the iron cross. There, you are angry already—quite a character! I won't say anything like that again, I really won't. Excuse me for being curious, but what was decided at the convention? Not over yet? Indeed! You know we live like moles in court and at Madame Dudu's on Kreskovsky Street. That is our whole life. Ha-ha-ha! Have a cigar?"

Bolotov smoked and listened with pleasure. After the

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awful days at the barricade, the noise of the Party convention, the dust and suffocating heat of the train, it was pleasant to be in a clean room, see a neatly dressed person, who exuded the odour of cigars and wine and was so remote from Party matters. Ikonikov was a wine-bibber and a gambler, but he had connections and contributed generally to terrorism. He was a surprise to Volodya, this elderly half-drunken being, exhausted by various diseases, living under the constant threat of exile, and yet in spite of that menace never refusing to help.

Evading his indiscreet questions, Bolotov smiled and said idly:

"How is it you are not afraid?"

"Who told you I am not afraid?" laughed Ikonikov, adjusting his gold pince-nez. "I *am* afraid, my lad. How can I help being afraid? If they should catch me, they would not consider the fact that I am a respectable member of the bar. They would send me away 'where Mokar never chased his calf.' I am afraid of everybody, of the porter, the policeman, even of you. Ha-ha-ha! What can I do? Let things take their course."

"Then why do you receive us?"

"Why? My God, what can I do? Sit by the fireside and grow thin brooding over my inviolability? Or shall I defend the sixth larceny at the district court? Or recover bills? Or make liberal speeches at the banquets? We do make liberal speeches, my dear man, we do make them. Our tongues are flexible. We investigate and analyse, we make a revolution—in the club. You know in Glebuspensky's book one merchant says, 'We lie from morning to night.' That's what our business is, too. We move our whole life long to and

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from the dog knows what. Now we are lying too. Let them arrest us." He became silent, and adjusted his pince-nez again. "Ah, my dear man, *je m'en fiche*, and that's all. We are going to be there. Ah, there is his excellency, Arkady Borisovich."

Rosenstern was about thirty-two years old, of small build, with a thick rough beard and black eyes flashing youthfully. He was dressed with the sporty taste of a foreign commercial traveller, in a long light grey overcoat and striped trousers. His appearance was very mild, typically Jewish, though the strong short neck and the broad round shoulders gave the impression of obstinacy and power. He held out his hand to Bolotov, then turned to Ikonikov, and said jokingly, with a forced accent:

"*Cher maître,* please leave us alone. You understand, a meeting of friends after a long separation. Something unusual. Yes?"

But Ikonikov was already gone.

Rosenstern stopped smiling, went to the door and turned the key in the lock.

"Well, Bolotov, I heard you could not come to an understanding with the committee. Tell me, is it true?"

"Yes, it is true." Bolotov was confused.

"May I know why?"

"I want to work with the terrorists."

"Hm, terror?" said Rosenstern pulling at his beard and looking at Bolotov attentively. "Terror? Why exactly terror?"

Bolotov rose. The same wearisome agitation that he had experienced in the committee took hold of him again. He realized he would not find simple words to express what had troubled him for a whole year. Rosenstern sat

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calmly in the soft chair with his knees crossed looking at him fixedly and piercingly, with his head inclined on one side.

"You asked—" Bolotov at last began, excited and flushing. "Very well, I'll answer. Have you reflected whether one can be on the committee and not work for terror? You see, the committee disposes of others' lives. It sends men to death? But when they sign death-warrants—how can it be right? There's Arseny Ivanovich, does he get his right because of his age? Or Doctor Berg, because of his ability? Or Vera Andreyevna, because of the years she has spent in prison, or Gruzdiev because of his work? Why should David, Vanya, Seriozha, some locksmiths from the Putiovsky factory go to their death unquestioningly with a bomb in their hands? Our blessings upon them. But the priests are the ones to give blessings, and we are not priests, Tell me, have I a right on the committee when I don't sacrifice my life, when I never shed blood? I am always, always afraid of bloodshed. Tell me, now can I? Where is my right to look on in cold blood while others are dying? Tell me, what right have I?"

He became silent, and lit his cigarette with trembling fingers. Rosenstern would not understand, he felt sure, any more than Doctor Berg or Vera Andreyevna.

"You see, my brother—my brother was killed at the barricades," he went on in a broken voice. "The Party created a future, a happy, glorious future, the kingdom of God on earth. Isn't that so? Every one of us creates it. There lies the meaning and justification of the countless sacrifices. But in our work lies a falsehood. Some do the commanding. It's a government and the governed; soldiers and generals. The committee

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command and the others die resignedly. A certain lawyer Ikonikov, even he searched for the truth. But we?" he finished indignantly, suprised by the harshness of his own words.

Rosenstern listened quietly. When Bolotov was done he asked quickly:

"Well, how should it be, according to your conception of the matter?"

"How should it be? I don't know. I don't undertake to decide for the whole Party. I can decide only for myself. I don't, I won't do what is bad in my eyes. I am not going to send people to their death."

"I will not do what I think is bad," repeated Rosenstern slowly, weighing every word. "Very well. But is to kill good or not?" he asked suddenly, and smiled. His face became strong and sharp, and Bolotov felt as if a different person were confronting him, not a commercial traveller, but a powerful sovereign who knew his own right.

"To kill? It's bad to kill, too."

"So." Rosenstern smiled again. "But you have made up your mind to work for terror. That means, you have decided to kill. You see, the problem is not so simple. It is very easy to say: that is bad, and one ought not do it. Sometimes a thing is bad, but has to be done anyway. It is necessary and even good to do it. Sometimes it is good to do bad, which is not a paradox. You say to kill is bad? You do, don't you? But to make terror is good. Can you dispute it? of course not. Well. You see—you know, I used to work with the terrorists. I left and now I am active on the committee. Do you think I did wrong?"

"With you it is a different matter. You were in

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terror. You have a right to be on the committee."

"I? A different matter? Why different? Why do you think I am ready to die at any time? And if I am not ready? Well, suppose I am not ready. That means I am wrong? Listen to me one minute. What do we do? We make a revolution. An all-Russian revolution, a mass revolution. Well, then, there must be somebody to write books, print them, carry on the propaganda, organize the masses, must there not?"

"Of course there must."

"Very well, then. Must the Party be managed or not?"

"The Party?"

"Yes, I said Party, but not the revolution."

"Oh, yes, it has to—"

"Maybe it not only has to, but what it does is even good? How should things be arranged? You say it is not permissible to manage the Party if one cannot himself be active—kill. But you also say it has to be managed. Who is going to manage it? The terrorists? But a terrorist lives a week, and not everybody can serve on the committee. I am speaking very seriously for I know. I myself was active in terror. It is hard, nobody knows how hard, to give away one's life. It is still harder to kill. But, believe me, it is immeasurably harder than anything else—" Rosenstern paused and looked Bolotov straight in the eyes—"to dispose of the fate of others. That requires tremendous power, much more than for terror. One has to be heroic, to take the responsibility for bloodshed, for the bloodshed of his comrades. Yes, it is a necessary work to watch people go to death and not go oneself. You say the committee sends people to kill. Who can send you? You dare to

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send another? Is it that a terrorist goes because you send him? Because the committee sends him? No, he goes freely. He and his conscience send him because he cannot do otherwise, because he ought to go for the sake of the people. Think over why you go to terrorism. Isn't it because you have not sufficient strength?" Rosenstern again looked sharply into Bolotov's eyes, smiling a little. But now Bolotov was not confused. He knew where the error lay.

"Let us drop the question of killing; we are both unable to solve it. To kill is a sin, but in killing there is no falsehood. One kills and one is killed. Straight and clear. But here lies the untruth. If one is a school-teacher, he ought to teach the alphabet in school, but not ask people to unsheathe the sword. If one never saw death one ought not to command others to slaughter. I don't talk about you, about Arseny Ivanovich, about Doctor Berg. I talk about myself. Only those make the revolution and create the future who are ready to sacrifice their souls for friends. Do you hear me? Souls! All that you were saying is very true, very sensible, but my conscience refuses to take your word for it. Do you understand? My conscience. One has to acquire the spirit of giving. Death is the only valuable sacrifice."

"But we make every sacrifice," Rosenstern answered quietly.

"You, but not I. I never risked my life before."

Rosenstern shrugged his shoulders angrily.

"You know, Bolotov, your point of view is bad, yes, bad. It is the point of view of a man that's been conquered, the point of view, I should say, of a romanticist."

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"Let it be the point of view of a romanticist. Listen, Arkady Borisovich, really, what is it that you are saying? You are saying that for the sake of the Party everything is permitted."

Rosenstern rose and walked the room with Bolotov.

"Yes, if you will have it so. But after all, not everything."

"Not everything? Well, what is not permitted? Expropriation of private property?"

"Yes, for one thing."

"But you say such expropriation is not permitted not because it is a bad thing to kill people, but because it lowers the dignity of the Party, impairs Party discipline, exposes to the temptation of money, in a word, is bad for the revolution. Tell me, is that so?"

Rosenstern stopped short in his walking. He bent his head. His neck became tense and his broad shoulders stooped. He was not pleased that Bolotov opposed him so stubbornly, and used words he thought unworthy of a Party member. Looking down at the carpet he said with evident irritation:

"Well, not at all so, of course—" He was interrupted by Ikonikov's hoarse voice at the door.

"Let us eat, gentlemen comspirators. Dinner is served."

When Bolotov left and went to the Dvorzhaya Quay, the bugler was playing the hymn *Ad Gloriam* at the port. It was cold and dark.

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CHAPTER VIII

A WEEK after the encounter with Arkady Rosenstern, Bolotov was informed by Arseny Ivanovich about the meeting place. He went to Moscow, and in an alley near the Piatnitza-Paraskeva Church he found the popular fighter in the Party, Ippolit. There were many legends going about concerning him. Rumour had it that he was the son of a member of the senate, a student of the military academy, and devoted his millions solely to the committee, and none but Volodya's cool daring could be compared to his. Slender and thin, delicate in build as a girl, Ippolit gave a hint in unfinished phrases that the assassination of the chief army prosecutor was being arranged. Not mentioning one word about the squad, he asked if Bolotov would undertake to be on watch in St. Petersburg in the disguise of a driver. Bolotov, though offended by his excessive secrecy, agreed nevertheless. Ippolit made an appointment with him for a month later on the corner of Gorokhovaya and Sadovaya Streets. Bolotov left Moscow by the next train.

When he came out of the Nikolayevsky station in his high boots and short coat and saw the crowded Nevsky Prospect sparkling in the sun, he realized for the first time the importance of his decision. As long as he was drawing up reports for the committee, disputing with Gruzdiev and disagreeing with Rosenstern, as long as he only talked idly about terror, he could not realize what awaited him. It seemed as though the only thing

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that mattered was that he was sincere to the bottom of his soul, ready to sacrifice his life, and everything else was a mere trifle, unworthy of consideration. The anticipation of an unavoidable death was so keen, gripped him so strongly, so filled all his thought, that he was unaffected by the nuisance of the daily disagreeable tasks. But here, on the noisy Nevsky, among the gay, satisfied crowds utterly indifferent to terror, he knew there was nobody to help him and fully comprehended for the first time what a burden he had taken up. For a moment he was frightened. He had become accustomed to privations in Moscow, but at the barricades he had had the consciousness of not being alone. Side by side, shoulder to shoulder with him were Seriozha, Pronka, Roman Alekseyevich, the whole squad, and back of the squad, the whole of Moscow, awakened by the revolt. He had a vivid picture of it all—Pronka firing, the dragoons falling back, the shops closed with rattling bolts, the barricades of snow being erected and the people assembling in wild mobs. Perhaps the fraternal feeling, the consciousness of even death being beautiful in company, buoyed him up and gave him the strength of calm to defend the Party banner to the last shot. Here in St. Petersburg, on the Nevsky, lost in the crowd, torn away from his habitual affairs, half noblemen and half peasant, neither a member of the committee nor a driver, he had no sense of the inspiring ties of comradeship and lost faith in them. He knew that somewhere the committee was working. Arseny Ivanovich was commanding, Aliosha Gruzdiev was teaching the peasants, and Doctor Berg was printing pamphlets. But that was a faraway, irrevocable past. Nobody was around, neither comrades, nor friends, nor acquaint-

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ances, and he had only himself to depend upon. He tried to convince himself that this was not true; that he was a member of the squad, that the squad was a part of the organization, and that every comrade, every soldier of the revolution was in sympathy with him, and grieved over his misfortunes. But the party program did not satisfy him. It was as if a transformation had taken place and he was not the revolutionist Andrey Bolotov, but as was written in his passport, the peasant Aleksey Maxinov Jurkov, who had come to the capital to work. Standing in meditation on the Nevsky, uncertain where to go, he crossed the square and turned to Goncharnaya Street. At the corner an old mole-eyed driver was dozing. Bolotov came near to the worn-out horse and touched the bridle lightly. The horse straightened up. The old man grumbled without moving.

"Well, don't cut capers, countryman."

"Grandfather, ah, grandfather," said Bolotov, and lifted his hat.

"What?"

"Listen, grandfather—"

"Eh?"

"It's like this, grandfather. I came, you see, to Piter (St. Petersburg)—" He ceased, at a loss how to continue. The old man looked at him, mumbling the while.

"I came to Piter—"

"What did you come for, eh?"

"Well, for the same thing. We are drivers—"

"I cannot hear you. Speak louder. Eh?"

"Drivers, I said—"

"Drivers?"

"Yes."

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"So, so, so. That is good."

"You see, a driver," continued Bolotov uncertainly, "you see, I don't know—everything is wrong. I cannot find my way in Piter. I have nobody here. I tried to find my countrymen. But they were gone, God knows where. How can I find them? And I don't know what to do. Do me a favour, grandfather, oblige me—"

The driver again mumbled.

"So, so, so. And where do you come from?"

"From Moscow. I worked in the tavern of Yakovliov."

Bolotov, feeling he ought to give some explanation of the good luck by which he, the servant, had turned master, stammered for a minute, and said carefully, looking aside:

"My father died—in the village. Well, a cottage—this and that. I sold everything. 'Let us go to Piter,' I thought."

In spite of being used to lying for the sake of his work, Bolotov blushed suddenly. The old man believed in every word so naïvely, without reasoning, was so trustful and ready with his whole soul to help, shelter and advise, that Bolotov was ashamed of his unavoidable lie. But the driver did not notice his confusion.

"Your father died? Too bad! Do you hear, countryman, is it time to go home?" He yawned and blinked his watery eyes. "If you care to sit down at home Pavel Petrovich will tell you all about driving in Piter. He will instruct you. Don't hesitate. Although Pavlovin Petrovich drinks a little, yet he is such a good fellow. You are from Moscow, aren't you?"

"From Kaluga."

"Kalutzky, then. Well with God, let us go. Why

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not help? One can always oblige a good person. Damn!" He smacked his lips, pulled the reins, and they crept back along the Nevsky. The old man sighed, groaned, and seemingly forgot about Bolotov. They travelled along at a jog-trot and stopped at the Baltic railroad-station, at a lonely almost empty alley. The yard was muddy, the trampled straw sodden. A flock of fat pigeons were flying about with a flapping of their wings. The air was acrid with odours of dung and hide. At the right appeared the mournful-looking, dilapidated barns, and from the open door of the stall there came the rhythmical clatter of hoofs. At the left was an unpainted stone wing. At the threshold stood a bareheaded peasant woman scolding volubly. In the corner near the stall a swarthy, unkempt peasant was squatting on his heels cleaning a cab. Paying no attention to the woman he continued cleaning, gloomily, stupefied as if after a drunken bout.

"Drunkard, devil! He sold the harness and spent the money in drink. There is no getting rid of you. Even the devil wouldn't take you, you unbaptized murderer!"

"What harness? Where? Well, keep quiet. Could you ride with such a gentleman? You cannot understand that, fool."

Pavlovin Petrovich, striking his chest, said with conviction:

"Don't mind her. She is a good woman. Well, I did drink a little. Can't a man even drink? A poor man is like a fly. Where there's a gate, there's a house; where there's a drink, there's a bed. But we will settle your affair, don't worry. If I say so, if I, Pavlovin Petrovich, say it, it is true. Just as if it were down in writing. We'll buy a horse, a cab and a sledge, too.

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You will be a first-class coachman. Yes, yes, tomorrow we'll go to the horse market and attend right to it. The horse-dealer—nothing, not one penny. For you, kind soul, the master's eye makes the horse fat. Isn't that so? Ah, what a mare I had! What a mare! What a gentleman she used to pull! 'Driver, to the Islands!' 'How much?' 'Whatever you please.' And a fifty ruble note was in his pocket. Don't you believe it? In Christ's name let us have a drink, Aliosha. What? Domina Vasilyevna may scold. What, am I not a human being? I shouldn't even drink? My God, how's that? What, a man is not even to drink?"

Bolotov drank the brandy down in disgust, and listened to Strelov's drunken babble. He was glad he had found shelter so quickly, and would go to the horse-market on the morrow, buy a horse and begin the strenuous life of a driver. But the feeling of guilt did not leave him for a moment. He told himself that circumstances had forced him to dissemble, and one word of the truth might ruin him. Nevertheless, he could not feel at peace.

Pavlovin Petrovich, red, sweaty, and hardly able to stand on his feet, tried to kiss him with his sloppy lips.

"Kiss me, friend Aliosha. So, so—kiss. Well, I see what kind of a person you are. But you can depend—depend upon me. I will fix everything. Well, we drink, Aliosha, yes?" He rested his head in his hand, and fell asleep at once.

Bolotov looked around. It was hard to distinguish anything in the smoke. How strange, Bolotov thought, that he, the revolutionist, should be sitting there in that fetid tavern, and should just have been speaking with that snoring sot, and at night would be returning not to

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his hotel but to the driver's house. When he lay down on the hard, vermin infested camp-bed and heard old Porfirych praying in the corner near the ikon, and saw him bowing and crossing himself; and heard Strelov, through the thin partition, hiccoughing loudly, and at his side saw an unknown peasant stretched out asleep, he again felt that he had been left completely to his own resources. But he was no longer afraid. He was even pleased that there was nobody to help him. He fell asleep and dreamed of the tavern, The Friends, of the tumbledown stables and the flock of pigeons that flew about flapping their wings.

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CHAPTER IX

TWO months elapsed. Bolotov had become accustomed to the life of a driver, or as Doctor Berg called it, the life of a servant. He no longer noticed the drunkenness and the dirt and the scoldings, and he did not complain about the exhausting work. He was happy he was not like the others, happy his hands were toil-hardened and happy he was not afraid of work, and did not live the easy, idle life of the rich, but shared the burdens of the common people. He rose at four in the morning, and stumbled through the darkness to the stable, yawning and shivering with cold. Squabbler, the black stallion that Strelov had selected at the market, old but still strong and sleek, would recognize his tread and neigh joyfully, tossing his head and pawing the ground. Bolotov would feed him, pat his smooth sides, and run back to the house through the frozen snow.

The house was stuffy, the sleeping drivers snored and a smoky night lamp cast a dim uncertain light. Bolotov would lie down in his clothes between Porfirych and the young labourer Senka and sleep until dawn. Early in the morning he would go to The Friends and slowly and seriously drink his hot tea. He became quite at home in the place, and was known as a sober, well-to-do exemplary man. Domina Vasilyevna set him up as an example to the "murderers and drunkards." Senka took his hat off to him, Porfirych talked about God, and Pavlin Petrovich occasionally "borrowed" a "green-

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back," without his wife's knowledge. Even the stout head concierge, Supritkin, would offer his hairy paw in greeting and inquire how "business" was and what he was making.

As had been agreed, Bolotov met Ippolit on the corner of Gorokhovaya and Sadovaya Streets. Contrary to the underground rules, Ippolit informed him that there were four drivers in the squad, Bolotov, Vanya, Seriozha, and the Vilna tanner Abram, and along what streets "His Excellency" the prosecutor drove as a rule. Every week he would invariably go to the Tzarskovelsky Station, and take a special train to Tzarskoye Selo. But in none of Bolotov's frequent watches on Fontanka and Zagorodnaya Streets did he ever see the prosecutor. Once he thought he caught a glimpse of the long, withered, well-known face on the platform of a street-car. But Ippolit decided Bolotov had been mistaken. His Excellency always went in a closed carriage, driven by his own horses.

Bolotov could not accustom himself to the constant keeping on watch. He had no fear of being arrested. In every kind of weather, in rain and slush, fog and frost, he would stop his cab at the places designated by Ippolit, and keep his eye on the Tzarskovelsky Station. It became his steady occupation. He now saw that the fighting terrorist "work," to which he had so passionately striven to attain and which he had valued so highly, consisted of ordinary spy-duty. Often as he sat on his driver's seat he would reproach himself for living like a spy; but then he would tell himself it had to be. Success could not be obtained otherwise, a "terrorist act" could not be accomplished. And doing violence to his conscience, feeling that it was undignified, disgraceful

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to spy, but to leave the squad would be still more so, he allowed his thoughts to turn in anguish to his family, to ruddy Misha who had been slain, to Sasha in his naval officer's uniform, to his father Nikolay Stepanovich, and particularly to his mother. "What would she say?" he thought, as he stood in the rain, watching the street intently. "Would she understand?" At such moments he felt a passionate desire to look upon his mother's kind face, her affectionate blue eyes, her silken shawl, embrace her and whisper a confession of his life into her ear. But he knew he was dreaming. With head bent, curbing his horse, tired and impatient from long standing on one spot, he would return at a quick pace to the hotel, where he greeted Senka jokingly and went with Strelov to the restaurant to hear the "machine."

One day, toward the end of March, when the concierges were clearing away the discoloured ice, and streams of melting snow were beginning to run in the yards over the rotten straw, and the air began to smell of manure, Bolotov went to keep an appointment with Seriozha. They saw each other seldom and then stealthily and only with the knowledge of Ippolit. It was already past seven, but the setting sun was still shining over the sea. Bolotov quickly passed the Ismailovsky armoury, turned into Fontanka Street, and stopped at a hack-driver's café near the church of the Holy Mother. He tethered his horse, entered the main room, and after looking around for some minutes, at last found Seriozha in the pushing noisy crowd. Seriozha, tall and blond, with close-cropped hair, was arrayed in a long dirty coat, and bore little resemblance to the fearless fighter whom Bolotov had obeyed at the barricades. He now reminded one of a village youth,

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a mere boy, just arrived in St. Petersburg from the distant steppes.

"Have you seen him?" Bolotov asked in a low voice, as he seated himself at the table, covered with a torn cloth. "I haven't seen him once."

"Neither have I."

"What does it mean?"

"I don't know."

"Perhaps we don't know how to watch?"

Seriozha shrugged his shoulders. Bolotov leaned over to him, and lowered his voice to a whisper.

"Listen. Do you remember, we had a talk one night in Moscow? You do remember? Yes? Now we are killing again, or at least we want to kill. Why, I live for murder, only for murder. I stand and stand, and wait and wait, to see whether he'll go by, whether I'll see him. What for? We think of it when we get up and when we go to bed. I have a friend in the tavern, driver Strelov, a drunkard and a tramp—he beats his wife. But perhaps he leads a finer life than we do. What are we doing? We lie. You may say, a revolutionist always lies, and his lying is right. Of course he does and of course it's right. But still it's lying. And particularly, have you noticed? it's difficult to tell a lie to a man like Strelov. He may be a drunkard and a knave, but he has an open soul and will believe any story. And then what? We are keeping watch. But so do secret service spies. We say it's abominable to spy; we say spies are scoundrels. And we ourselves? You'll say again, spies sell themselves, but we do it out of revolutionary conviction. Of course out of conviction, but still—still—we're spying. It's not important that I feel troubled. Something else is important; we

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are fighting for liberty, for justice, for truth. And we lie, lie at every step. When I joined the Party, I thought I had solved everything. Almost everybody thinks so. Violence? For the people even violence is permissible. Lies? In the name of the revolution even lies are permissible. Deception? In the name of the Party deception is permissible. But now I see it's not so simple. Does the end really justify the means? Is it really true that everything is permissible? I thought so. Everybody says so. Do you know Rosenstern? Even he says so. But it's a mistake. Yes, we must lie, deceive, kill, but we must not say it's permissible, justified, good; we must not think we are making a sacrifice when we lie, that we can redeem our souls by killing. No, we must have the courage to say this is bad, cruel and terrible, but it is inevitable. Yes, inevitable. The People's Freedom Party has left us a heritage, Zheliabov, Presvoskaya, Khibalchik, Mikhailov, heroes, of course, heroes; but why did they hide the fact that terror is not only a sacrifice, but also a lie, stained with blood and shame? I once had a talk with Ippolit. He wouldn't even listen."

Bolotov stopped, tremendously wrought up. Seriozha lighted a cigarette and said:

"With Ippolit? Well, even if Ippolit thought so, he wouldn't say so."

"He wouldn't? It's all right when one's conscience is clear; all right, when one has decided that terror is necessary and therefore lying and murder are permissible. But if I feel disgusted when I tell a lie, if it hurts my soul? You'll ask, why am I working for terror? Oh, my God, that's the point. I can't desert terror. I can't wash my hands of it. I have no right

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to say: 'you do it.' He who has committed murder once cannot be saved. He must give his life."

Seriozha was lost in thought.

"Why must he?"

"Ah, Seriozha, you ask. But tell me, what do you think? Don't you think one must go the limit? And don't you hate this spying? Didn't you say: 'It's not given to us to know?' Why are you silent?"

Seriozha hesitated, as if afraid that Bolotov might not understand. Then he began softly and quietly.

"I will say it again. It's not given to us to know. Yes, I think just as you do. We lie, we kill, we spy. Yes, it's a sin. But you try to explain why we kill, why we lie. And I say, it's not given to us to know. But that is no vindication. What would be the vindication? Of course, it is not in our program. But I'll tell you—it may seem strange to you, so don't be angry. This is what I think. I think, *you* won't solve it, and *nobody* will solve it. How can any one decide what is allowed and what is not allowed? How can one say, kill? And how can one kill? And how can you say: No, one must not fight, one must not spill his blood? Why mustn't one? In the name of what? And wouldn't it be a still greater sin? I think this way: one who has faith will not take up the sword. And one who does take up the sword can have no profound faith. He does it from weakness, not from strength."

"Have you faith?" Bolotov interrupted.

"I? Why, I have taken up the sword."

"Goodness, what has faith to do with it? Faith in God, you mean?"

"Yes, faith in God."

"In the Christian God?"

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"Yes, in the Christian God."

"In Christ?"

"Yes, in Christ."

Bolotov looked at Seriozha in surprise. His words about Christ and God seemed so obsolete and meaningless, so reminiscent of hypocritical sermons, that he was ready to believe Seriozha was joking. But there was no smile on Seriozha's face. Near them at a wet, dirty table was a drunken-driver, his head propped on his hand, singing noisily. The place smelled of beer and vodka.

"Well, even so," Bolotov thought to himself, "Christ does not justify murder? The Testament does not bless terror? Then why are you silent again?"

Seriozha raised his eyes unwillingly.

"Christ said: Thou shalt not kill. But people keep on killing. Christ said, Love thy neighbour as thyself. Well, is there any love in the world? Christ said: I have not come to judge, but to save. Who of us has been saved? You may not listen to me, but I say: It is not given to us to know. You ask whether I have faith. Do you remember this? One of the condemned murderers blasphemed Him and said; If thou art Christ, save thyself and us. Another, on the contrary, reproached Him and said: Art thou not afraid of God, if thou are convicted, as we are? And we are justly convicted, we get our deserts, but He had done nothing. And he said to Jesus, Remember me, oh God, when thou comest into thy kingdom. Do you understand? No?"

It was growing dark. The lights were lit in the café. Seriozha was silent, lost in thought. Bolotov paid the bill and went slowly to the stalls. In the yard a turkey

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was strutting up and down, its tail spread out proudly. A stout woman was doing her washing in a trough. The loafer Padliekha, was currying one of the horses. "Christ—Testament—Thou shalt not kill," Bolotov thought, as he climbed up on his driver's seat and wrapped his long coat about him. "What a religious fog! But still Seriozha is right; one should not, and must, yes, must. But why that should be the vindication I am unable to see. And no one can see it." He gathered up the reins and drove to Fontanka Street. A harmonica was playing somewhere. The white Petersburg night was falling.

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CHAPTER X

IN the beginning of April, about two weeks before the opening of the Imperial Duma, Ippolit made an appointment to meet Bolotov at Imatra. Bolotov left for Viborg at night, intending to return the same day. At the Viborg railroad station he unexpectedly met Vanya and a tall, broad-shouldered man of about thirty in the third class buffet. Bolotov guessed him to be Abram. Vanya, black-haired, with high cheekbones and dressed in a shabby faded coat, smiled with his narrow, slit-like eyes and nodded. When the train started and the snow-covered forests emerged in the dim morning light, he cast a furtive glance at the passengers and said in a low voice: "Where there's the needle, there is also the thread. To Ippolit, Andrey Nikolayevich?"

"Yes, to Ippolit. Why?"

"Nothing. Business is bad. His Excellency the Prosecutor absolutely refuses to show himself. He hides in his palace and does not make a sound. The cat knows whose meat it has eaten."

"Wait. He won't escape. Ha!" Abram replied quietly and yawned.

"The other day Seriozha saw him, thank God. Seriozha was driving his cab without a passenger along Liteiny Street, and suddenly he saw a carriage with the master himself inside. You know, Andrey Nikolayevich, Ippolit would give us the devil."

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"Why?"

"Because we are sitting in the same coach. We are breaking the underground rules of the Party. Oh, this underground business! I can't get used to the tricks. Day in, day out, you keep lying. And never a bit of rest. The other day a man asked me: 'Where do you come from, fellow?' I've got sick of it, to tell the truth. Everybody bothers one with: Who? Where from? What for? So I said: 'From Port Arthur. I was an adjutant to General Stoessel.' He looked at me. 'To General Stoessel?' 'What did you open your jaws for? Yes, to Stoessel.' He twisted his beard and said: 'Well, brother, you're a daisy.' 'And you're positively a fool,' I said.

Vanya laughed and lighted a cigarette.

"So he is oppressed by the deception, too," Bolotov thought, looking into his companion's eyes searchingly. He wanted to ask Vanya what he thought about spying, but Abram produced a newspaper from his pocket: "Have you read it, comrades? An expropriation on Podyacheskaya Street."

The day before Bolotov had learned at The Friends about this brilliant coup. When Strelov, unkempt, drunken, beat his chest with his fists, and told how they had stolen a "million and had killed five hundred people," Bolotov experienced a bitter feeling—a feeling of jealousy, anger, and indignation. The same feeling possessed him now. He was jealous of Volodya's success, was indignant at the "villainous" murder, and was angry because of his own wrath. He read the description in the newspaper, folded the paper, and turned to the window. Vanya touched him on the shoulder.

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"Andrey Nikolayevich."

"What is it?"

"Well, what do you say to it, Andrey Nikolayevich?"

"What should I say? It's highway robbery."

"Absolutely. I think it will do the Party tremendous harm."

"Harm?" Abram asked sulkily. "What do you mean, harm? Will the money be used for sweetmeats? A queer way of talking! If we are going to be shy about it, what will happen? Ha! Robbery! And aren't we being robbed and exploited? Aren't mothers weeping and daughters walking the streets? And how about pogroms? Have you forgotten the pogroms? Well, I have not. Why do you say robbery? Are we to be the judges? Oughtn't we be ashamed to sit in judgment? And what can be done without money? Tell me—what?"

Bolotov did not answer. Vanya flushed up, but also kept silence.

"And do you remember, Vanya, you once said: 'A great sin was committed'?"

"You mean the Cossacks?"

"Yes, the Cossacks."

"Absolutely, a sin. Ah, Andrey Nikolayevich, how many sins do we take upon our souls? They're not to be counted, not to be forgiven." He smiled a weak, forced smile, unfamiliar to Bolotov. "But what's to be done? It's not for ourselves. It's for the Party, for land and freedom. We ourselves need nothing."

"There, Vanya says the same thing," Bolotov thought. "Then am I mistaken? Are my doubts merely the leisurely thoughts of the 'Intelligentzia'? Is everything really permissible in the name of the people, and

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does the truth lie with Ippolit, Rosenstern and Vanya? Surely the truth is not in Seriozha's words? Not in the ten commandments?"

The day dawned in the east. The sun rose, a flaming red ball, and began to gild the tops of the trees and cast a rosy glow over the snow. Bolotov opened the window. A damp invigourating breeze blew in from the woods. The locomotive gave a shrill whistle. Houses built in the Finnish style passed by, then the platform and station.

"Imatra," the conductor shouted.

Sinking in the deep snow-drifts, Vanya, Bolotov and Abram made their way along a narrow path to the waterfall. From a distance they heard the dull, heavy roar, like the pounding of breakers. Bolotov, slipping over the wet stones and holding on to the wind-lashed fir-trees, descended carefully to the river. Clinging to the face of the cliff, he looked down at the rushing water, and shuddered. The muddy, yellow stream flowed so rapidly, that it looked as smooth as metal. Bolotov, sprayed by the icy foam, forgot about spying, stables, Strelov and the hack-drivers' yard, and listened to the deafening roar, to its wordless, ominous message. For a moment he lost consciousness. There was no Imatra, no fir-trees, no spray, no moss-covered stones, no worries, misfortunes, annoyance, no Bolotov, no squad, no Abram, no Ippolit. There was only life, powerful, eternal, indivisible and blessed.

"We kill. What for?" He thought in agony, then suddenly recalled a poem he had learned in school:

> "And with a great and secret sorrow
> I thought: How pitiful is man!
> What is he after? See how clear the sky is,

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And under it there's room for all.
But ever vainly 'gainst his fellows
He battles and contends. What for?"

At the Little Imatra, where the swirling stream becomes smoother and quieter, Bolotov saw Ippolit, Seriozha, and a girl he did not know in a sheepskin cap. She sat at the edge of the bank, her back turned to the path, and did not hear his approach. When Abram called, she turned around reluctantly. Bolotov was surprised. He did not know that there was a woman in the squad, and felt annoyed that Ippolit had concealed something from him.

After the first words of greeting all became silent. Vanya raised his keen, clever eyes.

"Well? Let's get down to business, Ippolit Alekseyevich."

"Yes, to business," Ippolit said thoughtfully. "We must decide an important question. Anna, are you listening? The committee has determined that the Prosecutor must be assassinated not later than the opening of the Imperial Duma. Whether the committee is right or wrong, is not for us to judge. I suppose we must abide by its decision. So we have only two weeks to do it in. Our work has brought no results. I intended to make the attempt on the street, but it's impossible. Who can guarantee that there will be no slip? Besides we must take into consideration the last expropriation. The police is on the guard, and it's more difficult to work now. So I say, can't we change our plans and carry out the committee's order by killing the prosecutor at once?"

The more Ippolit spoke, the harsher and abrupter his voice grew. His pale face with its fine features and

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deep-set eyes showed signs of his not having slept all night and his words, so exact and emphatic, showed they were the result of careful thinking. Bolotov listened, and felt he was beginning to understand Ippolit—his extraordinary "secrecy," his hatred of talk, his reserve and deliberation and cold aloofness. He now knew that he had neither love, nor joy, nor doubts. His whole existence lay in the "work," in terror. He had fallen in love, yes, yes, fallen in love with terror. Bolotov thought these things over, and was ashamed of himself for having been annoyed by Ippolit.

Seriozha broke the silence. "I think there is a possibility."

"What?"

"The prosecutor goes to Tzarskoye Selo every Friday. I think he can be killed at the station."

"At the station?" Ippolit asked.

"Yes, at the Tzarskovelsky Station."

"And the secret service?"

"What about it? The secret service is everywhere."

"Listen, Seriozha. We have stationed guards who have worked unceasingly for three months, and what has been our object if not to make sure of winning? To prevent what risk? Certainly not the loss of our lives. But I am convinced that even if it should be possible to enter the station, the secret service will prevent us from throwing the bomb. And then, of course, the thing will be lost. And it will be our own fault. You understand —our own fault."

"When one is afraid, he'd better stay at home," said Abram angrily.

Somewhere in the woods, a twig snapped. A squirrel ran up the trunk of a tree, and almost directly above

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them, in the pale blue, cloudless sky, the sun was shining with blinding brightness. And though Seriozha's and Ippolit's words dealt with murder and death, Bolotov felt no fear. "He battles all alone. What for?" passed through his mind again.

"That's right. If you're afraid of wolves, don't go to the woods," Vanya said in confirmation of Abram. "We must finish, Ippolit Alekseyevich."

Ippolit, frail and delicate, with his white face and golden hair, looked attentively at Seriozha, as if he hoped to guess whether or not the attempt would succeed.

"Yes, of course, of course," he said dully, "but how?"

"Leave it to me, Ippolit," Seriozha said in a low voice.

"Will you go?"

"Yes, I."

"Alone?"

"Yes, I'll go alone."

"No. I can't permit it."

"Ah, Ippolit Alekseyevich," Vanya began indignantly, "we have spoons but nothing to eat. We'll be going on all our lives this way, waiting for good weather at sea. I am ready to go to the station. To the station? Even to the devil, to hell! If there is no other way, then we must break our heads. That's the way I feel about it."

Abram listened approvingly, and when Vanya had finished said sulkily:

"The committee makes decisions. Well, that's their business. Ha! And I say the same as Vanya. Load me into a cannon and shoot! I'll put on my coat and will be ready. But we are not at a Bundist meeting to

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keep on talking for ever. Comrade Ippolit, what's going to be done? We won't be in time for the Duma, and after the Duma meets, the committee will disband us. So we must go, willingly or not, we must go. If Seriozha won't, I'll go. And we must get through with it."

After long hesitation, Ippolit gave his consent. It was decided that Seriozha go to the Tzarskovelsky railroad station. Bolotov heard the decision, but did not believe it. He had become accustomed to the thought that he himself would kill the prosecutor and was so prepared to die, so calm about it, that his comrade's words made no impression upon him. It was not until later, in the evening, when he was going back to the station, that he realized it was not he who was destined to perish in a week, but this tall, fair-haired youth, with the imperturbable face, who was walking at his side. The sun was setting beyond the woods, Imatra was roaring, and the snow was beginning to melt. Bolotov stole a glance at Seriozha. "He fought at my side at the barricades and now is to die. Remember me, God, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." Driven by a fiery impulse, he stopped suddenly and embraced Seriozha as if he were his brother and kissed him on his lips.

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CHAPTER XI

THE rumours about Ippolit had some foundation in fact. He really was the son of a senator and a student in a military academy, and he had donated everything his father had left him to the cause of terrorism. He was tall and slender, with delicately formed hands, was always well dressed, and had all the distinguished marks and refined manner of a well-educated man. These qualities made Arseny Ivanovich indignant. Besides all that, he spoke French fluently. He had joined the Party when still a boy just out of school, and had insisted upon being attached to the terrorist organization. At the time a plan had been under way to assassinate the governor-general at St. Petersburg, and since terrorists were few, he was accepted without difficulty, even without the usual rigid preliminary investigation. In the two years of his "work," almost all the terrorists had been hanged, and the effect of their execution upon him was a certain aloofness, a certain restrained obduracy. The memory of his lost comrades drove him on to "work" with double zeal, and to place no reliance on light promises and vain words. Though he knew Bolotov to be a member of the committee, he met him with the same hidden suspicion with which he met Seriozha and Vanya. Several months passed before he came to place full confidence in him.

Ippolit was never troubled by doubts such as haunted

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Bolotov. When he joined the Party, he resolved irrevocably that it was his duty to kill and to die, and never afterwards touched upon this troubling problem. The death of his comrades, his preoccupation with bombs and gallows and bloodshed made him insensible to the tortures Bolotov suffered over the rights and wrongs of the matter. The fighting work forged him into an "iron" terrorist, inspiration gave place to calmness, fiery daring to courage, variability of mood to self-control, inefficiency to rigid efficiency, love of argument to indifference to the opinion of others. But he retained the blind faith in the Party that he had had for two long years. He believed the Party program to be sane and right, and all the members to be self-sacrificing, honest and courageous. He felt a reverent love of the Party, without discriminating between Doctor Berg, Arseny Ivanovich, Rosenstern, and Aliosha Gruzdiev. In all of them, Rosenstern, Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg, and Vera Andreyevna he saw the personification of a Party's will, of its brains and its soul. But lately his devotion had begun to waver. He could not take in the committee's "directions" to curb terror. These strange directions seemed like an infringement upon the inalienable rights of the fighting organization, upon the sanity and dignity of the revolution. But with an aching heart, recognizing his duty to give unquestioning obedience to the Party, he submitted even to this. The committee knew of his dissatisfaction with their directions, and valued his soldierly obedience highly.

Neither Arseny Ivanovich, nor Doctor Berg, nor Vera Andreyevna ever questioned what sort of life Ippolit was leading. They had become so accustomed to his modesty, patience, obedience, firmness and readiness to

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die, that it never occurred to them to give a thought to the unfortunate circumstances under which this frail, girlish, shy, unpretentious man was "working." They were oblivious of the fact that every month some one of his comrades and friends was dying, and that in his eyes every new member was a consecrated victim, whose death he was to outlive. They were also oblivious of the fact that day in, day out, every minute, his thoughts were poisoned by visions of murder and bloodshed, and that to him even a successful assassination was a source of boundless agony. His life of martyrdom seemed no more oppressive than their own. They sincerely believed that they as the masters had a perfect right to hand him advice and give him instructions, direct his life, reproach him or approve of him. And he recognized their supreme right, and no one perceived the cruelty of the relationship.

Ippolit left Imatra tired and excited. For the first time he had broken his far-sighted rule of going slowly and avoiding unnecessary risks. Instinct, born of the experience gathered in his extensive "work," not reason, gave him a premonition of something that none of the comrades who had argued with him, neither Seriozha nor Bolotov, could foresee. He had a premonition that the prosecutor would not be killed, and the attempt would result in failure. However, he gave his permission, not because Abram and Vanya kept urging him so persistently, but only because, according to Rosenstern, all Russia, the whole Party, the whole nation desired the assassination, and desired it before the convening of the Imperial Duma. But in the very act of giving his consent to the attempt, he felt a deep-seated fear that the thing was unwise. It was as if he were killing,

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and uselessly killing, Seriozha with his own hands, a man whom he considered the most daring and courageous of all his comrades. Ippolit's usual composure deserted him. In the train on the way from Imatra to St. Petersburg, he resolved—something he had never done before—to find the committee and try to persuade Rosenstern that the delay was inevitable and the prosecutor could not be assassinated at that particular time. From the Finland Station he took a hack and went to the committee headquarters without first going to his hotel, the Belvedere.

The committee was meeting at Valabuyev's, in his solitary house on the Kamennoöstrov Prospect. As he was ascending the rug-covered marble stairs, he suddenly paused in thought. His unexpected call seemed like an act of insolence. The committee had ordered the assassination of the chief military prosecutor. Ippolit's exclusive business was to carry out the order without discussion, and not to offer proofs by way of dissuasion or entreaty. But then recalling that Seriozha would perish, he opened the oaken door without further hesitation.

In the room with the costly paintings on the walls and the Venus of Milo in one corner, where Volodya had quarrelled with Doctor Berg, sat Arseny Ivanovich and Rosenstern in leather armchairs. Valabuyev was not present. Arseny Ivanovich was talking in his dry, raucous bass about the elections to the Duma.

"Is it not a mistake, benefactor, that the Party has decided upon a boycott? A boycott may be all right, but see who is being elected. Labourites and Cadets. Didn't I warn them of it at the convention? But I wasn't listened to. Ah, Ippolit, what's new? Well?"

Restraining his excitement, Ippolit gave a brief ac-

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count of the consultation at Imatra. Rosenstern, gnawing his beard, listened intently and gloomily. Arseny Ivanovich shook his grey head.

"That's bad, benefactor, bad. Such a business! And what a misfortune! That's just the way. We live richly, all aplenty; but whatever we need, we must turn to others for. Don't feel offended, benefactor, but why has the spying brought no results?"

Ippolit was embarrassed. His pale cheeks turned still paler. He discerned a reproach in the words of Arseny Ivanovich, and thought the reproach was deserved. He had accepted the responsibility for the squad, and at a decisive moment, when the whole of Russia was placing its hope in it, the squad, through his lips, was voicing a confession of its unpardonable weakness. In Rosenstern's sad eyes, sparkling like a boy's, he read the same painful, though silent reproach.

"I don't know, Arseny Ivanovich, I don't know. I can't explain. Can't we postpone it for a month? Perhaps we'll manage. At least I have not lost hope."

"No, no, no!" Arseny Ivanovich waved his hands. "Impossible, unthinkable, benefactor, no."

"But the attempt at the railway station will end in failure."

"Why failure? Why, benefactor? Tell me, why?"

"The secret service, Arseny Ivanovich," Ippolit began hesitatingly, feeling that Arseny Ivanovich was answering as had Seriozha and Vanya, and he could not contradict him.

"Well, what about the secret service? The secret service is everywhere, my benefactor. You understand me, benefactor?" Arseny Ivanovich got up from his

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chair and took Ippolit's arm. "It's a po-lit-i-cal necessity. Think of it! We must have it now, today. When the Duma opens, good-bye. Yes. And if there is the least hope, we must take the risk. You know me. I am always on the side of the greatest caution. One who takes care of himself is taken care of by God. But in this affair even I tell you to dare it! However—" He interrupted himself and without releasing Ippolit's arm shook his head again. "Yes—business—"

"What do you mean by 'however'?" Rosenstern asked drily. "Listen, Ippolit, you must understand that we can neither allow nor forbid assassination. It's not in our power. But after the opening of the Imperial Duma, terror will be politically harmful, yes, harmful. That is not my opinion alone. It is the view of the convention, of the Party, of all Russia. And you turn to the committee. What can I tell you? The prosecutor must be killed. Is it possible? That is not for me to decide—but for you."

"I say it's impossible," Ippolit said in a voice barely audible.

"Well, that is the question. It may be impossible with one metal worker, but possible with two. If one is arrested, the other can throw the bomb. Of course, it's a mere suggestion. That is the way I think about it. But, of course, I cannot decide."

Ippolit covered his face with his hands. He felt his words were vain, because a successful assassination was essential at any price, essential to Arseny Ivanovich, to Rosenstern, to the committee and to the Party. The attempt would have to be made. Such was the will of Seriozha, of Vanya, of Bolotov, of the committee, and

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of all the numberless comrades. And he, Ippolit, had no right to run counter to their will. Once more he looked at Arseny Ivanovich with obedient eyes.

"Arseny Ivanovich."

"What, my benefactor?"

"So it can't be postponed?"

"No, no, no! God forbid!"

Valabuyev, plump, short-haired and red-necked, dressed in a fashionable frock-coat, entered, bowed respectfully and announced that Doctor Berg and Vera Andreyevna had come. Ippolit took a hasty leave. Arseny Ivanovich smiled and said, turning to Rosenstern:

"It's all right. It will work out. Still, he's a fine fellow! A horse has four feet, and yet it stumbles."

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CHAPTER XII

SERIOZHA was not familiar with that apprehensiveness for the cause which possessed Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg, Vera Andreyevna, Volodya, Arkady Rosenstern and all the comrades who were trying to direct the revolution. He had not joined the Party because of his faith in its program, as accepted by the convention, nor because he had hoped to lead the people. A settled, quiet life, its cruelty, hypocrisy and deception, had sickened him and filled him with indignation. It seemed to him that only in the Socialist Party, in self-sacrificing, unselfish struggle, was hidden the eternal truth, the immutable commandments of Christ. Upon himself he looked as upon a soldier, one of those nameless soldiers who are not supposed to doubt or question, but to die ungrudgingly. He had a firm faith in the revolution, a faith that God would not desert it, and he prayerfully consecrated himself to the most terrible work, to violence sanctioned by men.

In the middle of April he sold his horse and cab for half price, without bargaining, discarded his long coat, and put on a suit of German cut. In a soft hat and well-made coat, combed and washed, with curled moustache, the village lad was totally unrecognizable. He went to Moscow, changed his driver's passport, and from a hack-driver turned into a landowner and nobleman. Bolotov could not believe his eyes when he met him.

On Saturday, a few days before the opening of the

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Imperial Duma, the chief military prosecutor was expected to take his customary morning trip. Friday evening Seriozha met Ippolit. Until then he had stubbornly believed that the prosecutor would surely be killed. But on remaining by himself at the corner of Karavanaya Street late at night, he suddenly felt troubled. He wanted to call Ippolit back, shake his hand again, and hear his excited voice—hear that Russia was blessing terror. But Ippolit was lost in the crowd. Seriozha trembled and started to walk aimlessly along the Nevsky. He came upon the quay of the Neva. He bent his fair head and looked down into the leaden waters. The river flowed on with a roar, and a boat was puffing at the pier. Far away in the east beyond the Okhta, the night was paling and foreshadowing the April morning. Seriozha moved his chilled shoulders.

"Driver!"

"Here, sir, get in!"

"To the Islands."

"To Krestovsky?"

"Yes, to Krestovsky," Seriozha said, without thinking, and was surprised.

"Why? Why to the Krestovsky?"

There was a smell of wet grass and a salt tang in the air. Many coloured lights, green, red, yellow, shone coldly through the naked branches in the pale dawn. When he reached the lights, the driver stopped. Seriozha entered a large, brilliantly-lighted, crowded hall. The shrill notes of the orchestra mingled with the buzz of conversation and shouts and laughter stupefied him for a moment. On the stage an elderly woman in a pink skirt, with bare arms and neck, was flinging about her bare legs, while singing a popular song in a high

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soprano. Well-fed officials and merchants, officers with jingling spurs, were laughing and applauding with all their might. When Seriozha saw the half-naked woman with her painted face, those cringing waiters, that carefree intoxicated crowd, he began to feel his own loneliness still more intensely. He wanted to leave, but remembered the unattractive hotel room, the rude bed with its cheap coverings, and the long sleepless hours ahead of him. He frowned and seated himself at the table near the door.

He felt an inexplicable but steadily increasing sensation of painful apprehension, and could not understand its cause. Ippolit?

"But even if Ippolit is right, and all ends in failure, I am doing my duty. My conscience is clear. To die? Am I afraid of death? *Am* I?" He asked himself and answered with joyous exaltation, "No, I am not afraid. It's not that. Then why am I doubting?" He glanced wearily at the stage. Behind the footlights a man with long moustaches, in an embroidered blouse, was now dancing a trepak. He waved his arms about, beat his feet on the boards, and circled around. The place shook with applause. A hoarse, drunken, stammering voice bawled "Bravo!" unceasingly.

"Yes, I am going to kill," Seriozha almost thought aloud. "Yes, I am going to kill." And it came to him with irresistible clearness, with a vision of inexorable fate, that he had to kill, that he had no will of his own in the matter, that he had no power to decide, but that some one had decided for him. It was the same oppressive feeling that he, Vanya and Bolotov had first experienced in Sliozkin's house. And now, sitting in this Petersburg restaurant, in the midst of the laughter of

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women and uproarious gaiety, this feeling seized him again. "It must be so, it must be so," he repeated in anguish, looking at the stage with unseeing eyes. "Oh God, must it really be so? Why I, I don't want to kill."

He sat at the table, his head bowed, stirring his tea with a silver spoon. From a distance he must have given the impression of gazing intently at the stage. He recalled Sliozkin, the ice-covered barricades, the officer of the dragoons who had been shot and Vanya's mocking smile. "The mare has teeth, but is simple." He recalled Bolotov, his conscientious doubts, and his own indefinite answer: "It's not given to us to know. God, teach me how. I must kill tomorrow. But must I really, am I really obliged to, or do I want to, perhaps?"

He closed his eyes wearily, and suddenly to the accompaniment of music and noisy laughter, he had a clear vision of what would take place on the morrow. He saw an old, wrinkled, dead face, streams of blood running down the shaven cheeks, a bleeding corpse, and himself standing over the mutilated body. He recalled the text of the New Testament: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour."

"But this is blasphemy," he caught himself up. "Did I not commit murder at the barricades? Yes, I did and I will tomorrow again." He could think no more. He had no strength, he felt he would not dare to kill, murder was an unpardonable sin and would destroy his immortal soul. Always courageous and firm, strongly confident of the righteousness of his life, he now felt he was a little child and really "it was not given

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us to know" and death was no redemption. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," he whispered the words of God, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

"Are you lonesome, young man?"

Before him stood a painted woman in a low-cut blue dress, her hands on her hips. She looked straight into his eyes with an inviting, shameless, half-tender, half contemptuous smile. Seriozha frowned and hastily left the restaurant.

The following day, Saturday, he awoke before seven, untroubled by the doubts of the day before. In the morning sunlight murder did not seem to be a deadly sin, and God would hear him. Not to murder seemed like a greater sin. It would be wrong to pass by silently and acquiesce in deception that had been laid bare. Without excitement, quite self-assured and calm, as calm as when he had gone to the army barracks, he went to the Aleksandrovsky Park and found Ippolit. Ippolit gave him a bomb and said, glancing at him furtively:

"You did not sleep last night, Seriozha?"

Seriozha smiled.

"Oh, I slept well."

"I couldn't sleep. You know what, Seriozha?"

"What?"

"Perhaps we ought to refuse."

"Refuse?"

"Yes, postpone the attempt."

"What for?"

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"I'm afraid I'm not accustomed to working this way."

Seriozha became lost in thought for a moment.

"And the committee?"

"Oh, what's the committee?" Ippolit burst out unexpectedly. "It isn't the committee that is responsible, but I. You hear? I am afraid."

"What are you afraid of?"

"I fear for you, Seriozha—and for the whole squad," he added sullenly.

Seriozha hesitated a second, then shook his head resolutely, and said harshly, forestalling any attempt at argument:

"Our duty is not to reason."

"Not to reason?"

"Yes. Our duty is to do it."

"You think so?"

"Yes, I think so."

Ippolit dropped his eyes.

"Well, good-bye, Seriozha."

"Good-bye."

Seriozha wanted to stop him and embrace him, but Ippolit was already gone. A cold thought flashed through his mind: "I'll never see him again." He sighed and started off for the railway station taking long strides.

The day was gloomy. Heavy clouds covered the sky, and a light rain fell intermittently. The bomb was uncomfortably heavy, and Seriozha was afraid of dropping it. On the corner of Gorokhovaya and Fontanka Streets, he saw Bolotov with his hack. He saw the well-known eyes, now so dearly beloved, and the black horse with white hoofs. Without stopping, he touched his soft hat.

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At the station on Zagorodnaya Street an officious-looking police inspector walked to and fro with his plump hands behind his back and a policeman beside him keeping watch. Trying not to look at him Seriozha crossed the street and ran up the steps. But as soon as he reached the station platform he saw an immense gendarme with epaulets standing at attention. From a side door guarded by a sentry appeared a dry-looking, bent old man in a general's uniform. He was walking rapidly, his left leg limping slightly. The distance between him and Seriozha was about sixty feet, and there were two spies and the immense gendarme right there; yet Seriozha, fearing the old man might escape him, threw out his right hand and ran towards him. He had hardly had time to cover half the distance when the old man suddenly stopped, took hold of the coach, turned his wrinkled face, and looked straight at Seriozha. Seriozha, with eyes dimmed as if by sleep, saw his frightened look. He knew he would be prevented from running up to him and the attempt had failed, but still hoping for a miracle he rapidly swung his arm and with all his might, so that it hurt his shoulder, hurled the round, heavy bomb. He did not hear the explosion. When the smoke cleared away Seriozha lay motionless on the platform with his hands stretched forward alongside the dead gendarme. Over his face and chest hot streams of blood were flowing. The old man in the general's coat stood at the steps of the coach, his lower jaw trembling.

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CHAPTER XIII

TOWARDS the end of April the Imperial Duma opened. The committee, after long deliberations, decided to halt the terrorist activity temporarily. Doctor Berg insisted upon the complete abolition of the fighting organization. He contended that in the Party Parliamentary work was inconsistent with terrorism. His arguments met with success. The majority ruled "to hold the men under arms." It meant that all the terrorists, in St. Petersburg, in the provincial towns, and in Moscow, were obliged to risk their lives in vain.

Through the whole spring and the hot summer, Bolotov kept to his driver's seat. Seriozha's death had made him obdurate, though he still felt disgusted with the fighting police's "activity" and was embarrassed by his double-faced occupation.

But now he often caught himself thinking other, secret, revengeful thoughts. Frequently lying on his cot at night, when the drivers were snoring loudly, and darkness filled every corner, and the lamps shimmered dimly and lazily, he would lie awake till dawn, thinking about the prosecutor. As he gazed wide-eyed at the low, soot-covered, misty ceiling, he would recall the painful day when he saw Seriozha for the last time. And gradually, secretly, like a sly and skilful thief, a new feeling crept upon him, the desire to kill. He feared these thoughts that were a sign of degeneration. Indignantly

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he would reproach himself for his fury, for the wild anger of revengeful savagery, but he could not control himself. He became gloomy, did not talk to Porfirych, nor listen to the drunken confidences of Strelov, and, on seeing Supritkin, would hasten to get out of his way. The yard, criss-crossed by the wheel tracks, overrun with lice, permeated by the smell of manure, disfigured by the presence of the slatternly women, and noisy with the pawing of the horses in the stalls, oppressed him. He feared these idle days of his would never end and the prosecutor would not be killed.

In the streets this wrathful feeling gained an even stronger hold on him. As he passed Fontanka and Sadovaya Streets and the Church of the Holy Mother, as he entered the drivers' eating-houses, he would recall his short meetings with Seriozha, his strange but now unforgettable words, so full of love. And though the work of terror had been temporarily suspended, he tried to continue the spying on his own account, without anybody's instructions. He would spend hours around government buildings at the war ministry, the Imperial council, the Tavrichesky Palace, the Chief of Staff; and would diligently watch for the lame bent old man in the general's coat. He believed it was his supreme duty and his duty to the Party to secure victory at the cost of the most difficult labour. This faith inspired him and justified the contemplated murder.

After Seriozha's death, Bolotov came to appreciate the manner of Ippolit's life. He understood that this man, tired by the unequal struggle, orphaned and exhausted, was veritably possessed by hate, by wrathful anger. Ippolit was sure he was not alone, that Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg, Vera Andreyevna, the com-

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mittee, the Party, and the whole Russian people were awaiting this assassination to which they had pledged themselves. He was convinced it was only by chance that he headed the squad, and every member of the Party, every hungry peasant, every poor student would gladly take his place and sacrifice his life. He was unconscious of being an exception, of Russia now being silent, of the revolution having been shattered, and his bombs being the last cold flickerings of a dying fire. Yet even had he been convinced that the government had won and the Party lacked the strength to fight when the people were not back of it, he could not have deserted the "work." He thought death alone was the crown of this bloody work, and he awaited death as he would have awaited reward and redemption.

He found sympathy and support in his friend Abram. Abram was a huge, good-natured giant, with a broad, child-like face. He was a tanner by trade, and had a family in Vilna. Neither editorials, nor the speeches of orators had convinced him of the necessity of a "systematic" terror. Experience, pogroms, houses burned down and children shot to death had taught him the cruelty of the average smug life, and he did not doubt the righteousness of "fire and sword." Like Ippolit, he cherished an unshaken faith that he was blessed by the people, by Israel martyred through the centuries, and the heart which has tired of hate "shall never learn to love."

On one point they could not agree. Abram spoke about the "masters" and students, with an ironical, contemptuous smile, and he had no love for the committee. To heated assertions that he was unjust, that the committee made no distinctions between landowner

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and workmen, soldier and general, he stubbornly and distrustfully answered, "I know! Ha! Don't rub it in. The same exploitation. American graft." His place had been in Volodya's troop, but by a happy coincidence he was found by Ippolit, to whom—the "exploiter" and "student"—he became attached, body and soul. Bolotov liked his smiling Jewish eyes and naïve simplicity of soul—the absence of the problems of the Intelligentzia.

Anna, an unmarried woman of thirty, with a thin, pale face and full, sparkling grey eyes prepared the bombs and took care of the dynamite. She had been a village nurse, and had acquired a deep and earnest love for the people, a love not founded on books and programs, but on life. It was this that had forced her into terrorism. She knew no hate, no wrath and, like Seriozha, she was oppressed by murder. But she thought that by killing officials and nobles she was doing an invaluable service, was bringing nearer the day of revolution, that day, when, "there shall be no rich and no poor—no masters and no slaves, no sovereigns and no subjects." She dressed carelessly, smoked long cigarettes and spoke with an accent on the "O," like the inhabitants of Nizhni Novgorod. Bolotov became attached to her. He liked her humbleness, her readiness to give her life, her inspired tales about the village and the peasants, her kindness, her truthfulness, and her rough, almost masculine voice. She respected the committee, and believed the Party was destined to conquer the world.

The chief military prosecutor lived in Liteiny Prospect, in a gloomy, uncomfortable, barracklike house. Towards the end of August the fact was established by

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means of spying that every Thursday he went to the war ministry. Bolotov not only knew his face, moustaches, hair, medals, and epaulets by heart, but even his driver, his horses, his carriage, its wheels, spokes, lamps, reins, steps and windows. He could recognize the prosecutor at a distance of fifty yards and could foretell whether he would go out or not. Whenever he left his residence, spies were stationed at the entrance, and concierges were on guard at the gates.

It was Indian Summer. The days were clear, transparent, crystalline. In the Petrovsky Park the birches were turning golden. The birds no longer sang, and in the evening beyond the Neva the sea sparkled in the fiery rays of the setting sun. The nights were cool, the sky alight with silvery stars, and the early mornings began to be frosty. One Monday at the beginning of September Bolotov met the prosecutor on the Nevsky Prospect. He returned home in the evening, unhitched his sweating horse, and put it in the stall. Without fixing up his cab he put on his linen cap and, avoiding the ill-smelling pools, went outside the gates. Near the gates, on a bench sat Strelov, black and long-haired, and the stout concierge Supritkin.

"The chief of police was asking for you," said Supritkin, offering his fat hand without looking at Bolotov and yawning.

"The chief of police?"

"Yes, Khrisanf Valeryanovich."

"What does he want?" Strelov asked with a wink. "Don't you know? Look at the infant. Surely not milk for the children. What?"

Supritkin sighed.

"He said you should come to the police-station."

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"To the station? What for?"

"What for? On business. The government says so. We don't know."

For the first time Bolotov observed Supritkin closely —his fleshy bull neck, his baggy eyes, his red beard, his shiny boots and his dull, self-complacent glistening face.

"We fight, we offer our lives, and this fellow, this Supritkin—! These Supritkins and Strelovs will come and overpower us, will win by their magnificent dulness, by their well-fed bellies, their foolish self-satisfaction, their boots, harmonicas and wooden self-assurance," he thought, becoming excited and trying to conceal his traitorous emotions. Strelov coughed and said carefully:

"The other day they brought a phonograph to The Friends. Now it's just time."

"Just time for what?"

"Just the time to go to The Friends."

Supritkin looked at him severely.

"You only go to cafés. Well, aren't you going to the station-house?" he said to Bolotov, without turning his head.

"Yes, I'm going."

"Why the chief of police? A fine? But if it was a fine he wouldn't summon me to the station-house. Passport? But my passport is all right. Am I being spied upon?" Bolotov thought, as he turned into the Zabalkansky Prospect. "Spied upon now, when all is ready, when the Duma has been disbanded and the committee has given its consent, when I know his carriage? No, impossible." He was so well known in the restaurant and the drivers' hotel, he bargained so skilfully with passengers, he could give graft to the policemen

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so unblushingly, he had become so accustomed to groom and harness the horse and to carry oats, he had grown so thoroughly into this driver's life, that it seemed inconceivable to him that he could be spied upon. But when he turned into Fontanka Street and saw the dirty café where he sometimes used to meet Seriozha, he felt uneasy. "And if they do catch me? Then there will be no attempt, the prosecutor will not be killed, and Seriozha will have died in vain. And I shall be guilty." He looked around. There was no one behind him. The quay was deserted, with only a solitary policeman in the distance on the bridge. "I must tell Ippolit. Let Ippolit decide. Should the squad perish?" He forgot about himself. And it was only as he approached the restaurant, The Deer, the usual meeting-place, that he realized he would die. "I'll be dying in vain, without having killed. Yes, I am to die. No, it's impossible."

The same day Ippolit advised Bolotov not to return to the drivers' hotel, to abandon his driver's outfit and leave temporarily for Moscow. As he was leaving, Bolotov felt certain he would kill the prosecutor.

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CHAPTER XIV

IPPOLIT feared the squad was being watched. He warned the committee of the fact and decided to hasten the contemplated attempt. On Thursday, the tenth of September, Vanya was to be stationed with a bomb on Fontanka Street, Abram, at the Tsepnoy Bridge, Bolotov, on Liteiny Prospect. It was along one of these routes that the prosecutor would pass on his way to the Ministry of War. This time there was some hope that the attempt would be successful.

Bolotov arrived at St. Petersburg on the first train. Now, a few hours before the murder, he experienced the cold indifference that had possessed him at the barricades in Moscow. Without thinking and without feeling any excitement, merely because the habit of concealment had become second nature to him, he took the train at Klina and got off at the Obukhrova Station. Not wishing to wander about the streets of St. Petersburg, he went to a saloon and began to wait patiently for the appointed hour.

The rain kept up its irritating rattling on the misty window-pane outside, pedestrians passed by with umbrellas and goloshes, and the driver slumbered on his seat. Across the street, near the closed doors of a wine store, a crowd of people jostled each other. Bolotov took special notice of one tramp. He was unkempt and dirty, with a sickly, greenish face and red, inflamed eyes. He had no coat, but wore instead a torn woman's blouse,

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and was barefoot in spite of the cold autumn weather. Pressing his freezing hands to his chest and bending his weakened body, he jumped up and down rapidly in an attempt to get warm. He was shivering with cold. When Bolotov saw this man and the weeping heavens and the policeman in his cloak and the government wine-store and the wet walls of the houses—the whole dull, sodden day in this city of St. Petersburg—the murder appeared unnecessary, without life or truth. It became strange that he was preparing to kill, that he would surely kill, that he would surely hang, and that the rain would keep falling, the policeman would keep on getting wet, the windows would keep on shedding tears, the drunken, hungry people would keep on jumping up and down and shivering. "Will I die?" he asked himself, holding in his breath. "Yes, of course I'll die—for them? Yes, for them—and for all—and for everything," he answered with proud joy.

But as soon as he had said these words, it was instantly borne in upon him with absolute definiteness that he had the right over his own life—that neither the prosecutor nor Seriozha, nor the Party, nor the squad, nor even Russia could force him to die, could have the right to condemn him as an unwilling sacrifice. He glanced around the saloon. And the whole unpleasant place, the dishes, the waiters, the barkeeper, the guests and the filthy tables, suddenly seemed cosy and attractive. He was loath to leave it. But it was nine o'clock. Bolotov threw some coins on the table, and reluctantly went out pulling his cap over his forehead. The hungry tramp was still jumping up and down in the rain, looking with greedy dejection at the unattainable doors.

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Bolotov turned into Fontanka Street and passed through the circus into the Summer Park. It was cold in the Park, the rain fell unceasingly, and his feet sank into the wet gravel. Naked goddesses and nymphs, not yet covered with straw for the winter, stood forlornly among the bushes. The place looked deserted and gloomy. The clouds crept dejectedly across the sky. Bolotov was getting soaked and felt sorry again that he was not in the beer saloon. In a lonely alley, near the wet fence, he met Anna. They were both wet and pale. Anna was carrying a square, black portfolio, with "Music" printed on it in golden lettering. Bolotov took the bomb silently and began to wrap it carefully in a red handkerchief.

"Be careful," Anna said aloud.

Bolotov made a tight knot. He heard his heart beating harder and more unevenly and the lead weight inside the bomb ticking in unison with his heart.

"I am going to die," flashed through his mind again. But this time he was insensible to the meaning of the words.

He would not have the courage to die, it was all a dream, he felt. That in ten minutes he would leave the Park, leave these people, so close, yet so remote from him, would meet the carriage and throw the bomb, and himself would surely be killed—it all was unbelievable, absurd, terrible. He called up a clear picture of the drivers' inn, of the tumbledown stalls, Supritkin, Strelov, the restaurant, The Friends, and Squabbler, white-hoofed, snorting and whinnying at his approach. And that servile life so full of hardship, the coldness and hunger and filth, the cursing, the drunkenness, the

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"spying," Seriozha, the committee, all seemed a cloudless, unattainable state of joy.

"And Vanya?" Bolotov said hesitatingly.

"Vanya—Vanya is already at his place. Abram, too," Anna replied. "If the prosecutor does not show up, come at twelve o'clock."

Bolotov, walking with bowed head, left the Park, stepping carefully, so as not to stumble. Hardly conscious of where he was going he turned in to Liteiny Prospect. The bomb ticked rhythmically. "Tick, tack; tick, tack," it sounded to him from within. It was the weight running up and down the tube. Should he but press it a little tighter, the tube would split and the mercury explode. Well, and what if it did? So much the better. I should not hear it at any rate. He smiled quietly and tightened his hold on the bomb. Trembling slightly, he came to the Simeonovsky Bridge. On Fontanka Street, near the Bridge, stood Vanya, in an overcoat and high boots, holding a heavy bundle in his hands. At Boltov's approach, his clever, narrow, slit-like eyes sparkled, and he said in a kind, grave whisper:

"A man goes, but God leads him. Good luck, Andrey Nikolayevich."

Bolotov did not answer immediately. A flush mounted to his cheeks. He felt ashamed that he had thought of himself, had felt regret at giving his life, and on the day when every bit of his courage was needed, he bargained with himself like a servant. "Am I a coward?" he asked himself, in self-hatred, and turned pale. "How about Seriozha and the Party and the squad?" With a happy feeling of relief and in the consciousness that he was to die and that he had no fear of death, he turned to Vanya and said:

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"For land and freedom!"

It was almost ten o'clock. The rain was falling noisily, but the sun was pushing through the ragged clouds. Bolotov turned into the Liteiny Prospect and stopped at a tobacco store. His head was somewhat dizzy and his heart was still pounding. He looked dully at the multicoloured goods in the window and read the name: "Blend Eel String, price, one ruble." "What does it mean, string? Blend string? And why one ruble?" He felt weary and his back ached, as if some one were forcing him down with all his weight, and he looked indifferently at the entrance to the prosecutor's house, and though there was a policeman on guard at the entrance, and concierges on guard at the gate, and spies slinking about in the streets, he did not want to, could not, believe, that soon the prosecutor would appear two yards away.

"And suppose he does not come out," he thought, with a secret cowardly hope. He did not dare acknowledge to himself that deep down in his tortured soul there lurked a dark prayer: "May he not come out, may he not come out, may he not come out." He tried with all his might to chase the thought from his mind, but it surged back the more insistently. He longed for some unforeseen chance to prevent the attempt. "Then I am a coward," he thought disgustedly, flushing deeply. But he suddenly straightened up in tense expectation. Along Liteiny Prospect, from the direction of Basseinaya Street, on the right side about forty yards away, a carriage was coming towards him rapidly. Bolotov immediately recognized the prosecutor. He recognized the heavy driver with the red whiskers and the round hat with a peacock feather. He recognized the

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fine black horses, the sparkling harness and the red wheel-spokes. That instant all the doubts that had been troubling him, pity for himself, the desire to live, and fear of the assassination vanished like a dream. He thought of Seriozha. He could hear the ticking of the bomb. He made two heavy steps forward and stopped. He was standing on the asphalt sidewalk, lean, tall, and blue-eyed, his blue jacket unbuttoned, and holding the heavy bomb. He watched the approaching carriage with burning eyes. He saw the snorting thoroughbreds, the red-whiskered driver, the shining body of the carriage, and distinctly heard the clatter of the iron horseshoes. When the carriage was only a few feet away, he ran into the middle of the street and raised the bomb over his head. Through the carriage window he saw the dried-up old man in the general's uniform. He was sitting huddled up, asleep in a corner; but suddenly he trembled, stretched out his hand, and thrust out his shrunken medal-covered chest. His old, yellow, wrinkled face, with its undaunted, but inquisitive eyes, appeared at the window. There was no time to think. Bolotov made a sweeping motion with the bomb tied up in the handkerchief and wincing as if he were falling into cold water, threw it against the window.

On the instant the glass broke with a crashing sound, and a blow over the head dazed him for a moment. Breathing in the hot smoke, he stood motionless for a second, not believing that all was over. When he came to himself he saw blood streaming over his burned shoulders, and instead of the horses and the carriage, he saw a soft, blood-covered mass. To the right, near the sidewalk, lay the stout driver. He was naked to the waist. Bolotov saw the bare, pinkish body, the hair on

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his chest and the big, blown-up belly. One eye was swollen, blue and half-closed, the other, glassy-like, stared straight at him. Bolotov sobbed, and immediately somebody caught his hands from behind.

"I've got you. A-a-a! No, sir, you won't get away," a terrified voice was shouting.

Bolotov did not try to free himself. He looked down again. He saw the same round glassy eye, with its fixed, surprised stare. What came after that, Bolotov could never recall. Some one knocked him down with a blow in his face, and he lost consciousness.

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CHAPTER XV

VOLODYA'S troop did not expropriate half a million rubles on Podyacheskaya Street, as Mitya had expected, but only two hundred thousand. With the help of this money Volodya enlarged his organization and applied himself to the carrying out of his cherished dream—"systematic terror." In May the governor of Tver was killed and an agent of the secret service mortally wounded; in July a bomb was thrown at the minister of justice; in August the troop set fire to two manor-houses; in September they robbed the Voronins' office near the Khopilovsky Ponds in Moscow, and shot the chief of gendarmes on the streets of Kiev. Volodya's name rang throughout Russia. Even Arseny Ivanovich shook his grey head and said to the committee, "If one loafs and goes fishing, my benefactors, he can't have a thing. Volodya there has his hands full, and what he does is worth doing." Of course, Arseny Ivanovich did not approve of "private expropriations," but he could not deny that he regretted that a revolutionist of such iron will as Volodya had left the Party "for no reason," for a "mere whim."

Volodya's squad grew considerably in numbers, but changed in personnel. Mitya was hanged in Tver, Prokhor was killed in Kiev; Yelizar was arrested in Moscow, and Epstein went to Paris to edit a "free journal." Of the old picked fighters, only Freze and the Fly remained, besides Olga. On the other hand, about forty new members joined his squad—students, workmen, and Jewish

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artisans. The numbers had grown, and not all were now taking part in the terrorist activity, but the majority were kept waiting impatiently for "work." And the unoccupied members, wearied by idleness and loneliness and much vain talk, began to revert to strife, to that "babbling of the Intelligentzia" which Volodya hated so utterly. But he was powerless to resist this empty talk. He treated the stream of advice, the scores of "sure schemes," with contempt, and was only careful that the talk should not endanger the secrecy of his work. He prevented the comrades from holding meetings and communicating with their relatives. But he did not always succeed. He could not sufficiently impress the importance of caution upon his people. Terror was succeeding, the squad was strong, there was enough money, and it was hard to believe that arrests were possible. Gradually, because of their idleness and boredom, drunkenness began to spread among the men, and one day a deserter by the name of Svistkov sold his revolver to buy liquor. Volodya refused to accept humiliating explanations and immediately expelled him. However, that did not stop the drinking. It was kept up in secret, hidden from both his and Freze's knowledge.

In that one summer Volodya aged five years. His quick hazel eyes lost their lustre, and premature wrinkles appeared about his lips. He still had faith in himself, in the unimpeachable righteousness of terror. But he no longer doubted that his men would scatter if he should be hanged. He made no reply to Epstein, who wrote from Paris that "everything was permissible to the strong of purpose." He paid no attention to Olga's dissertations on the "abysses of the high and the

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low," but he had long private talks with Freze. He had a vague feeling that the wave of blood and unrestrained murder that had risen after the first "expropriation" was threatening to drown the squad and terror and even himself. Sometimes he sat up whole nights through, thinking. But had any one asked him just what his thoughts were, he would have been unable to answer. Olga observed him in perplexity. The work seemed to be going along nicely, and Volodya ought to condone the petty offences of drunkenness, empty talk, and quarrelling. Freze alone understood Volodya's worries. Himself of a quiet, exacting nature, he kept a strict eye upon every movement of the squad. He bore the whole burden of the daily labour with its dull, petty details. Not only was he responsible for the funds, the secret gathering-places, the passports, ammunition, assignments, and bombs, but he knew each of the fighters personally, and because he knew them so well, he shared Volodya's anxiety. The Fly annoyed him particularly. After the Khopilovsky expropriation an abrupt change had come over the man. From an obedient, devoted member of the squad, he suddenly became lazy and insolent.

It had been decided that the troop was to assassinate the governor of Moscow in October. A week before the date set, the Fly announced that he would like to have a private talk with Volodya.

Volodya made an appointment with him in Sokolniki, at the same place he had first met him half a year before. The day was gloomy and rainy. The wet firs looked sorrowful. The last yellow leaves were drooping from the dying birches. The air smelled of wet grass and moss. The Fly walked at Volodya's side with a

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brisk step, his hands behind his back. He spoke with barely concealed irritation.

"Judge for yourself, Vladimir Ivanovich. This isn't my first day with you. Haven't I been trying my best? Think of Podyacheskaya Street, for instance, or Kiev, when Proshka was killed. I can say I have never stopped at risking my life."

"Well?"

"Well, Vladimir Ivanovich, and what do I get for it? Instead of gratitude, an absolute lack of confidence. Take Herman Karlovich Freze. He sticks his long nose into everything. 'How much did you spend yesterday? Where were you? Where are you going? Let me see your passport. Let me see your gun.'" The Fly gave a faithful imitation of Freze and then spat contemptuously. "What is it? As if we were on a ship, by God. I'm no slave, let me tell you, Vladimir Ivanovich."

"Are you dissatisfied?" Volodya asked harshly.

"I really don't know how to explain." The Fly stopped short and began to roll a cigarette. The matches were damp and it took him a long time to light it.

"Answer my question."

"Well, I am dissatisfied."

"Freze?"

"No, sir. What's Freze? Let him go in peace, Mr. Freze."

"Then what is it? Tell me."

"Oh, everything, Vladimir Ivanovich."

"Be plain. What is it?"

"Please tell me, how can I be satisfied? First of all, absolutely no confidence."

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Volodya halted and gazed at the Fly searchingly. The Fly daringly raised his rapacious, hawklike face.

"Take care, Fly!"

"As you please, Vladimir Ivanovich."

"Speak out, what do you want?"

"Oh, what's the use? Mere talk can't make a sandal."

"I told you, be frank."

"All right. My business isn't much." He shrugged his shoulders. "If you want me to, I'll tell you. I'll tell you the whole truth. On Podyacheskaya Street we got two hundred thousand. From the Khopilovsky expropriation, twenty-five thousand. That makes a total of two hundred and twenty-five thousand. We have spent about forty thousand for paper, revolvers, bombs, horses and so forth. Isn't that so? I counted—"

Volodya flushed. He was beginning to understand what the Fly was after. The Fly, his head down, his hands clasped behind his back, tapped the ground slowly with the end of his boot. Volodya looked at him again.

"You counted?"

"Exactly. We counted. Vladimir Ivanovich, let me ask you, have I not worked along with the rest?"

"What?"

"Have I not been working, that is, robbing, along with the rest? Was I on Podyacheskaya Street or not?"

"Well?"

"Well, if you please—you owe me something."

He had no chance to go on. Volodya, scarlet with rage, teeth clenched, not knowing what he was doing, with his head whirling so that he felt he was about to drop, made a wide sweep with his arm, seized the Fly

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by the collar, and began to shake him like a blade of grass. He saw the Fly turn blue in the face, and his wicked narrow eyes begin to burn. Choking with anger and shaking the Fly with all his might, Volodya kept repeating hoarsely:

"What? What? What? How dare you? How dare you?"

The Fly, his face distorted with fury, braced himself with his feet on the ground and twisted Volodya's wrist.

"Let me go, Vladimir Ivanovich!"

But even had he wanted to, Volodya could not have let him go. Forgetting himself, and the Fly, and the squad, and terror, he let loose upon him all his doubts, all his burdensome thoughts, all the anxiety and uncertainty of the last days. The Fly repeated quietly,

"Let me go, Vladimir Ivanovich."

When Volodya finally stepped aside, the Fly, smoothing his wrinkled coat and looking away, said with a wicked smile:

"As you please, Vladimir Ivanovich."

"I know—" Volodya roared, still crimson in the face and breathing heavily. "And get out of here! You hear?"

"Yes, sir, I hear. But how do you mean it? A wet man is not afraid of rain, nor a naked one of robbers. Make no mistake—"

"What mistake, in the devil's name?"

"Oh, well, it's easy to wrong me, easy, Vladimir Ivanovich. But who will pay for the wrongs? Of course, we're small people."

"Quit your nonsense."

"All right. Good luck to you. Good-bye."

The Fly raised his cap and walked away with the same

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bold stride, as though nothing had happened. Volodya dropped wearily on to a bench. He followed him for a distance with his eyes. The tops of the fir trees rustled, and the rain began to fall faster.

"He'll sell us out," Volodya suddenly thought. "By God, he'll sell us out." He jumped up, ran after the Fly, and seized him by the shoulder:

"Hey, Fly, I'll kill you!"

"What?"

"Not what, but I'll kill you!"

"As you please."

"Shut up! You can't trifle with me, you know!"

"I'm not trifling, Vladimir Ivanovich," the Fly answered slowly and harshly. "What do you mean? Why trifle?"

Raising his cap again, he turned into a side path and disappeared behind the wet shrubbery.

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CHAPTER XVI

VOLODYA lived on Srietenka Street in a furnished rooming-house named Rome. On Sunday, the twentieth of October, he left the house in the morning and came out on the Trubnaya Plaza. He was going to Tverskaya Street to keep an appointment with Freze. Instead of crossing the park he passed through the Neglinny Alley into Petrovka Street, and halted at Datziaro Street. For the last few days he had been aware of something strange, something unusually foreboding, but he tried not to think of it. It seemed to him that somebody was watching him, that somebody's penetrating eyes were continually scrutinizing his shoulders, hands, moustache and beard, that some one was cunningly setting a trap for him. On Friday he saw a tall red-haired man in Filippov's café. The man, who had not removed his hat, or coat, was eating hurriedly at the buffet, stealing glances about the room, as he did so. He wore a check coat of English cut. In the evening Volodya met him again on Tverskaya Street and on Saturday he saw him on Sofiyka Street, near a shoemaker's window. The man was in the company of a youngster with a face swollen with drinking. Now, as Volodya stood near Datziaro Street, he looked about for the two men, sure that they were watching him. He did not see them on Petrovka Street, but as he looked over the Kuznetzky Bridge, near the Dzhamgarovsky Passage, he noticed the red beard of the one and the black cap set far back on the head of the other.

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The assassination was to take place on the following day. Volodya could not forget about it for a moment. The insignificant cares, labours, and affairs, the dissatisfaction with his men, his sense of isolation, and even the oppressive talk with the Fly had not lessened the unusual feeling of anxiety that came before a contemplated assassination, and here on Kuznetzky Street, though aware of being followed, he gave no thought to spies and prison, but to the governor. He did not believe in a possible arrest. He was accustomed to being out of danger. He was accustomed to feel that his will was law, and he did not doubt for a moment that the assassination would be accomplished. He walked slowly away from the shop-window. The day was cold, but sunny, the sky blue. Wheels were noisily rumbling by, the streets were filled with talking crowds, and the bells of the Church of the Holy Mother were ringing for the noon prayer. In the Furkassov Alley Volodya heard hurrying steps behind him. He looked back. A police inspector of imposing figure and with white gloves was running toward him, one hand outstretched, the other on his sword. The inspector looked at him with hostile, terrified eyes. On the other side of the street, at the door of a restaurant, Volodya saw the familiar red-bearded man whom he had seen at Filippov's café, and four others with him, spies, Volodya thought. When he saw the inspector's stern face, he realized he was about to be arrested. But just as before in Podyacheskaya Street, he did not believe that death was at hand. He did not believe that on the eve of the assassination he would be detained here near Lubianka Street by unknown persons, and that these persons had the right to convict and hang him. He felt so strong

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and healthy, the sun was shining so brilliantly, the street was so noisy, that the thought of death seemed senseless, unreal, cowardly and cruel. But suddenly the red-bearded detective nodded to him. Volodya came to himself, grasped the loaded revolver in his pocket, and determined swiftly on his course of action. With his big head down and his right hand in his pocket, he turned upon the stout inspector with a defiant, threatening look.

The inspector stopped about ten yards away, lowered his eyes, and said irresolutely, almost quietly:

"Mr. Gliebov, the mayor would like to see you."

Volodya glanced at him and frowned. The inspector was pale and his chin was trembling. Without hesitating or even thinking Volodya raised his revolver deliberately, took two shots at close range, turned around, and ran towards Lubianka Street. He heard excited shouts, the tramp of feet, and involuntarily, conscious of nothing except that he was being overtaken, yet even so not fully aware of his danger, he ran into the first garden he saw. He passed the dark gates without seeiny anybody, crossed a long, vacant yard overgrown with grass, and made for a pile of lumber that he noticed in the corner near a whitewashed wall. There he looked around. About ten yards away a red spy with a drunken face was following him, breathing heavily. Volodya had a revolver in his hand, and pulled the trigger, concealing the motion. He mounted the lumber pile, jumped down on the other side between the lumber and the wall, and set himself with his back to the wall.

"Oh, you'll get your round of nuts," Volodya smiled to himself and made an opening.

But when he touched the cold wood and felt the damp, slippery moss, a sharp sickening sensation seized him.

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The sensation was so strong that he involuntarily let the hand that held the revolver drop and set his back against the wall again, standing with his long legs apart and staring at the lumber with blank, unseeing eyes. He knew he would never come out of that place again—from behind that pile of lumber, from before that white-washed wall. It was the end—irresistible, inglorious death. For a moment he felt a slight shiver go through him, and his heart was suddenly chilled. But he felt no terror—not even regret. Olga, the squad, expropriation, the Fly, Freze, terror—all seemed like a deceitful dream—as though all that was happening now—the frightened inspector, the heavens high above, the hot revolver, the trap he was caught in—was the treacherous, unavoidable thing that he had been awaiting every day; as though there had been no life before, and life had just begun that day, there on Lubianka Street, on that vacant grass-covered plot; as though he, Vladimir Gliebov, Volodya, had been born for this single purpose—to hide like a hunted beast behind the lumber and to die with a revolver in his hand. With only a few hours to live and no hope of escape, his one thought was to exact the highest price possible for his life.

"It's all the same," he repeated aloud, but did not hear his own voice. "But they'll get their round of nuts." The policemen ran in through the gate. Volodya selected a young one, with a vacuous face. To save his cartridges, he made sure of him and pulled the trigger when the policeman was only about fifteen yards away. As he shot, he was surprised to notice that his hand trembled.

The policeman turned back. Volodya, his face

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flushed, his damp hair clinging to his forehead, looked through the opening. Near him lay the spy who had been pursuing him. He wore a grey jacket, and lay face downward, his feet toward the lumber. Volodya noted his dirty boots with their worn soles. His round, pimpled, swollen face looked alive, and his ragged moustaches stirred slightly. About forty yards away from him, almost at the gate, lay the captain of gendarmes like a child. The buttons on his coat sparkled in the sunlight. The third man, the policeman who had just been hit, was mortally wounded. He was sitting on the grass, his knees drawn up under him, clutching at his heart. A red stream of blood issued from his mouth.

All became still at the gate. Volodya looked up at the wall again, but without hope. It was smooth, without a single projection, and about forty feet in height. He sat on the ground behind the lumber. While he was shooting, a splinter of wood had sunk deep into his hand, and it hurt him. He sat motionless, without thinking, sure there was no way of escape. Wet chips of wood were scattered over the ground. He picked out a long sharp piece, covered with dried tar, and waved it in the air. He recalled his boyhood—a big vacant lot like this one, a blue sky like the one overhead, piles of lumber like those in front of him, and he, a lively boy, playing a rude game of tennis. "It's fine to play tennis," he thought with a smile, and waved the piece of wood again. He felt uncomfortable in his cramped position on the ground wet with rain. He rose slowly, and with bent head began to creep along the wall. He did not know why he was doing it. He saw a path of clay, a strip of sky above him, and the damp, moss-covered lumber hemming him in. He was all alone now, he thought, the

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police must have gone, and they would not be able to find him. But suddenly shots rang out; bullets whizzed by him.

"There's no getting away," Volodya thought. "Well, all right." He straightened up suddenly, and with head high, shoulders erect and chest expanded he looked quietly, almost indifferently, at the soldiers. By their caps he recognized them to be grenadiers. He took aim and began to shoot, and kept on shooting, loading his revolver after each shot and aiming carefully.

He could not tell how long it lasted. He felt a sharp blow on his shoulder, like the cracking of a whip. He did not realize he was wounded until his shirt grew wet and the blood showed through on his coat. He felt no pain, and continued his desperate shooting, standing in full view of the soldiers. Suddenly the shooting ceased. Volodya, black with smoke, his coat torn, reached for his cartridges. He had only five left. His heart grew cold within him, and he realized with merciless clearness that his end was a matter of minutes. And suddenly he was seized by a blind frenzy of rage and despair.

"They'll hang me? Me? Vladimir Gliebov? Hang me? They? These people?" he thought furiously. Then he remembered his band and the projected assassination. "Then the governor will not die! Then the band will perish!" His face flamed, and his staring eyes filled with blood. As through a mist he saw a row of soldiers running towards him. But he gave them no chance to reach him. Drawn up to his full enormous height, his curly black hair uncovered, his face distorted with rage, his smoking revolver in his hand, he turned swiftly upon them. He had no hope of escape, no hope that his life would be spared, and he did not understand

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why he walked straight towards them. He was merely obeying some hidden impulse, the last effort of a strong, healthy body, which could not become reconciled to death.

Volodya was so immense and so terrifying in appearance, his eyes shone with such wild determination, his revolver looked so threatening, that the soldiers hesitated. But one recruit, a small fellow with frightened eyes, winced, and shot without even aiming. A yellow flame flared out. Volodya made one more irresolute step. His knees bent under him. Trying to retain his balance, he stretched out his left hand, then fell heavily upon the grass. He was immediately surrounded by soldiers. The red-bearded detective in the English coat went over to him, looked at him, and poked him in the side curiously with the toe of his boot.

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CHAPTER XVII

FREZE learned of Volodya's death the same day. After waiting for him two hours on Tverskaya Street, he went in the evening to the "emergency quarters," the Port Arthur saloon. In the smoke-laden place, clerks were drinking and workmen in shawls and boots were brawling and cursing in drunken voices, while a phonograph played noisily. At a nearby table a sedate merchant breathing heavily and wiping his bald head with a napkin, was talking to a young man.

"Oh, oh, oh! Our sins! There are too many of them now. God and the Holy Mother spare us. There's no living with them now. Shouting liberty, liberty! And what's the use of it? What's all the row about anyway? What's going on? One can't understand. Cossacks surrounded him. But the general took pity on him. 'Surrender,' he says, 'or you'll perish without a confession.' And what do you think?"

"W—well?"

"Well—it's a wonder how desperate people can be. Says he to the general, 'For the time being God has patience with my sins. Take that!' And crack! Killed him on the spot."

"The general?"

"That's what I said. Well, they got to thinking what to do next. They thought and thought, my dear fellow, and decided a careful horse is safe from beasts. So they brought a cannon. Began to fire away at him.

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Shot him to pieces. And how strong he was! Fell to the ground, all in blood, life almost gone, and he was still waving his arms, 'Hurrah for liberty!' "

"God in heaven! A Jew?"

"No—Jew! One of our own people, they say, a Muscovite, the son of a merchant. His name, they say, was Volodin," the merchant added softly, and sighed.

Freze was startled.

"About whom are they talking? It's impossible. It's a mistake," he thought, growing pale. He wanted to break in, to get the details, but for reasons of secrecy he said nothing. Summoning the waiter, he paid his bill and left. A light, chill rain was falling; it was cold and dark; here and there a light glimmered. He could not believe that Volodya had not kept the appointment. "Nonsense! What a silly conversation!" Freze waved his hand, and not knowing where to go, he turned to the Nikitsky Boulevard. "But how about the governor? Tomorrow at ten o'clock—" he thought, and stopped immediately. A ragged boy in a torn cap ran towards him with a bundle of evening newspapers.

"Mister! Buy a paper. Very interesting. Death of the murderer Gliebov!"

Freze unfolded the damp sheet near a street-lamp and glanced through it hurriedly, trembling with excitement. For several minutes he remained standing there with the paper in his hands. He considered himself a quiet and resolute man. He was the one who filled the bombs for the band. He was the one who had saved all the bags with money on Podyacheskaya Street. He had planned the Kiev assassination. He had been Volodya's right hand. He was proud of his cold-bloodedness, of his imperturbable strength. But there, in the

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rain, near the wet lamp-post, he felt his courage deserting him. He could not believe that Volodya had been killed, and the band was orphaned. He could not believe that terror was crushed. He could not believe that he, Herman Freze, was left alone, without any one to turn to for help and advice. His tall figure, usually erect, was so bent now that he seemed to have lost several inches in height and he dragged his feet like an old man, as he slowly made his way towards Arbata Street. On Arbata Street many lights were burning.

"Hey, hey! Look out! Watch out for yourself!" suddenly came a loud warning, and he was spattered with mud as a sleek horse dashed by. He wiped the mud off carefully with his sleeve; and the motion suddenly brought him to himself.

"I ought to be ashamed of myself. If Volodya is killed, then the assassination won't take place. If he is killed, then the band is being spied upon, is being followed. Then I must warn all of them. I must save them."

He turned hurriedly into Tverskaya Street, where Olga lived in the hotel The Prince's Estate. As he mounted the stairs and passed the majestic porter and the officious bell-boys, he felt as if he were being followed by searching glances. It seemed to him that at the brilliantly illuminated entrance and at the glass doors spies were watching him, and that there was an unusual number of policemen in the street outside.

"Can it possibly be that Olga has been arrested?" he asked himself, putting his hand into his pocket and carefully raising the trigger of his revolver. "All the same, I must warn her."

He knocked at the door.

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"Come in."

On recognizing Olga's voice, Freze gave a sign of relief. Without taking off his coat, he seated himself at the table. He began to speak, but Olga stopped him. By the fact that he had disregarded the underground rules and had come to her in the hotel, by his gloomy silence, Olga perceived that something terrible had happened, something impossible to believe, something that had never happened before. Pressing her white fingers to her breast and rising slowly from her chair, she said in a faint, piteous, pleading voice:

"Volodya?"

Freze handed her the newspaper.

"I must tell you, Olga Vasilyevna, very sad news."

She cast a frightened look at his German face, which looked as if it were cut out of stone. Freze saw her lips tremble. She read the report through, dropped the paper, and still pressing her fingers to her breast, suddenly swayed and caught at the knob to steady herself, but fell helplessly into a chair. Somewhere far away, at the other end of the corridor, a piano began to play a noisy tune.

Freze got up and paced the room.

"Look here, Olga Vasilyevna. You're being spied upon. I noticed spies on the street. You must think how to get away. Do you hear me, Olga Vasilyevna? Listen to me. If you don't see the danger, I must point it out to you. Yes, I must. You must think of the band. You have seven kilograms of dynamite and bombs. If you're arrested, they will be seized too. Let me take them with me."

Olga did not understand what he was saying. She heard his firm even voice. It seemed to her that some

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black, hairy-winged insect had entered the room and was buzzing, buzzing continually. With an effort she half opened her eyes. Freze was pacing the room. He was tall and slender and looked like a cane in his short black coat.

"I can't understand you. What is it?"

"I say, let me have the dynamite. You're responsible for it. I'll take it to a safe place. And you—please leave at once. Yes, I say at once."

It now seemed to her that it was not Freze. It was a narrow, sharp, metallic pendulum, swaying to and fro. It swayed to the right and then slowly, firmly, evenly, to the left. Right and left.

"I will not go."

"How can you talk that way? You have no right to speak like that. Business first of all. If you're being spied upon, you'll be arrested. You'll be arrested tonight, possibly in an hour. You must do as I tell you. You must give up the dynamite and leave."

She felt her head spinning round.

"I won't go."

"I think, Olga Vasilyevna—"

"You heard me. I won't go!"

She gathered all her strength and looked straight into his eyes, her own full of hatred.

"Listen, Freze, I thank you for your kindness. But you know, you know—darling, I beg you, leave me alone."

Freze shrugged his shoulders and frowned. Her behaviour filled him with indignation. The band was in danger, the assassination would not take place, and she was thinking of herself, of Volodya, of her own woman's

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sorrow. He looked into her round face that had suddenly darkened.

"I understand, Olga Vasilyevna. If you think I don't understand, you're mistaken. But I insist, leave this place immediately. If you don't go, you will surely be arrested."

Again that troublesome insect was buzzing again, again the pendulum was swinging evenly to and fro. Olga felt she could not control herself and would burst into tears. She could not talk or listen to any one, no words could touch her. In the weak, shrill voice with which she had asked about Volodya, she cried:

"Go away, go away, go away!"

She covered her face with her hands. Freze stood by without knowing what to do or how to make her leave the place. He gave no thought to himself. He knew he was being spied upon, too, and might be arrested. But he had long before made up his mind that some day he would hang, and he felt no fear.

"My duty is to save Olga," he thought. "Yes, it is my duty as a member of the band."

"Olga Vasilyevna."

"Are you still here?"

"*Um Gottes willen,*" Freze began excitedly in German. "Olga Vasilyevna—"

As he descended the stairs, gloomily, angry with Olga and with himself, he again noticed the presence of the spies. In the street outside the entrance were a policeman and a Cossack officer. The policeman looked at Freze suspiciously. Along the wet sidewalk a row of lamps cast a dim light. The Red Plaza was deserted. Through the darkness loomed the statue of Vasily Bla-

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zheny. Freze passed into the Kremlin and stopped at the statue of Aleksandr II. He grasped the iron chain, pressed his cheek against the cold statue, and looked long upon sleeping Moscow spread out below. The statue of the Czar rose majestically above him. In the distance wheels were rumbling. Around him all was quiet, and the rain fell continuously. The clock on the Tainitzka Tower struck twelve. Freze trembled. He walked back to Tverskaya Street, his shoulders stooping and his feet dragging on the pavement. The entrance to the hotel was now deserted.

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CHAPTER XVIII

WHEN the door closed behind Freze, and Olga was left alone, she burst into a shrill laughing and sobbing. Her face quivered, her teeth chattered, her head beat against the back of her chair.

"And I did—did—believe him—that Volodya had been killed—that Volodya had been killed," she kept repeating through her laughter. The idea that Volodya had been shot, that he was no longer alive, that his dead body lay in the police-station, seemed so absurd, so improbable, so pitiless, that she felt like bringing poor unfortunate Freze back and caressing and reassuring him. She had known that sooner or later Volodya would hang, and had often tried to imagine his death. But she had always consoled herself with the thought that she would die along with him. But now that Volodya was killed, and the long-expected had taken place, her calm forsook her. She crouched in the chair, her arms thrown across the back, and her whole body shaking with her hysterical laughter. She cherished a secret hope that Volodya might hear her, and kept repeating the beloved name:

"Volodya!"

Her laughter was so pitiful, so cruel, that it filled her with terror. "Who is laughing? Why?" she whispered, stifling her sobs and trying in vain to control the chattering of her teeth. Her body writhed as if in pain.

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She bent down. On the dusty floor lay the newspaper. She unrolled it carefully. At the top she saw the headline in big letters, "Death of the murderer Gliebov." She got control of herself and read the whole article through carefully and with dry eyes. There could be no doubt. Volodya had been shot dead, today, Sunday, the twentieth of October, in Lubianka Street, in the yard of the lumber merchant, Pizhov. She laid the newspaper down on the table, smoothed out the wrinkled page and rose. Behind a yellow partition stood her bed, and under the bed a trunk filled with dynamite. Olga recalled how Volodya had brought her the first bombs. She recalled his pock-marked, bearded, smiling face, his big strong hands, his jacket and silver watch-chain; his voice, so slow and commanding, with its sing-song Moscow accent; the marriage ring he had given her; his firm, heavy step. Her cheeks flushed, and she felt bitterly ashamed. She saw herself at Volodya's side in her secret lodging, when he had returned exhausted and haunted by doubts from the Moscow barricades. She heard her own meaningless words, to which he had listened condescendingly. "One must be strong. To the strong all is permissible. One must not fear. The abyss of the low and the abyss of the high. Did I say that? Did I dare to speak to him of strength and boldness, of God knows what abysses?"

She stood in the middle of the room, her hands hanging at her side, her eyes sore with weeping, and gazed at the trunk. It was of black leather, half-concealed by a torn linen cover.

"What good are all these bombs now?" she asked herself despairingly, and covered her face with her hands, and threw herself upon the bed. At the far end of the

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corridor some one was playing the piano. A sweet tenor voice was singing off-pitch a little French romance:

"Si tu m'aimais, Si l'ombre de ma vie-e—" Olga repeated the hackneyed words with dry lips and did not recognize her own voice. She felt a sudden pain shoot through her whole body. She thrust her head into the pillows. It seemed that her life had been split into two unequal parts, and there was nothing ahead of her.

"This is a dream. No, not a dream. I'll wake up," she kept repeating, biting her lips until they bled. At that moment she thought she heard the door squeak and steps on the carpet.

"Can Volodya be coming? Yes, of course it's Volodya. He'll come. How could he fail to come?"

She sat up in bed. The room was empty. The bluish electric bulb cast a cold light shimmering through the muslin partition. The room smelled of dynamite and drugs. Though Olga could see there was no one in the room, and though she knew the door was locked and Volodya lay dead in the station-house, still she stretched out her arms and threw her head back and began to whisper swiftly and passionately:

"Have you come? Yes? Tell me. You've come, haven't you? Why don't you speak? Don't torture me. Say something. You know how I love you. Don't you believe in my love? Don't you? Don't you believe me? Do you love me? Look, I'm alone. I'm afraid. Volodya, Volodya, Volodya!"

The singing in the hall ceased; all was now painfully still.

She suddenly recalled her childhood. Annunciation Day. The church-bells ringing. The snow melting. The streams murmuring and sparkling in the sun. She

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is a little girl, in a short velvet coat, returning from the mid-day service with her father, a bent, decrepit old man. She is holding on to his tobacco-stained military coat. She feels happy; the blue, blue sky is shining, her father is laughing and showing his toothless gums; she is laughing with light-hearted glee.

"No, it's a dream, it's a dream. *Si tu m'aimais, Si l'ombre de ma vie-e—*" Again a piercing pain stabbed her body. She felt like shouting, shouting, with all her might, with all the strength of her lungs, so that everybody could hear her, so that Volodya could hear her. She recalled how she used to pray when she was a child. The dark interior of a church. Candles burning. The odour of incense. The cherubic Hymn.

"To pray! God, if I could pray! God, teach me how." She buried her face in the pillows. "It's all the same! It's all the same!"

Suddenly she was seized by an obscure impulse. She opened her eyes and let her feet down from the bed. Now she clearly understood what Volodya's death meant. Nobody could help her. Life was at an end. What had happened was irreparable. "Then there is no need of living," she whispered.

Her hair was dishevelled. Unconsciously she began to twist it into a knot. She did not finish putting it up, but went over to the dresser with hesitating steps, not sure of her resolve, still hoping for some miracle. Among the gloves and underwear she found her revolver. She took it out and examined it carefully. It was a pocket-revolver, a small one that Freze had bought for her. "If you are in doubt of its working properly—"

She recalled Freze's measured words, smiled and

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pressed the trigger irresolutely. The spring snapped. At the same moment Olga realized that she had a passionate desire to live. Death was unnecessary, unwanted—hateful; there were many days ahead and her horror would pass away. Feeling a chill stealing upon her, her breath coming hard, she laid the revolver down on the table quickly as if in fear it might shoot of itself, and unconsciously looked into the mirror. She saw her tear-stained face, her disordered hair and her plain black dress.

"Here I am. And Volodya is gone," she said aloud, and stretched her hand for the revolver again. "No, I need not—I need not live." Her fingers touched the cold steel. "Volodya, Volodya, Volodya!" She pressed the revolver to her breast, but immediately let her hand fall back again.

There was a knock at the door. The knock was loud and bold.

"Can it be Freze? Oh, my God, what for? Why is Freze here again?"

With the revolver in her hand, she went over to the door reluctantly, and said in an irritated tone:

"Who's there?"

"A telegram," replied the voice of a servant.

"A telegram? Deliver it tomorrow, please."

"No. It must be delivered now. Please open the door."

There was a tinkling of spurs, and Olga heard some one say angrily:

"Don't mind her. Break the door in. Open the door, miss."

It was not Freze, of course, but who it could be, or what was wanted, Olga could not imagine, forgetting

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she was liable to arrest, and arrest meant the scaffold and death. Like a child treating danger with light-hearted contempt, waving irresistible fate aside, afraid to admit there was no way out, she repeated stubbornly:

"Tomorrow."

Again the spurs tinkled, and another commanding voice said:

"Madam, in the name of the law, open the door. It's the police."

On hearing that, Olga at last realized that death was before her.

"The police? Then it's the end," she thought.

A sharp pity for herself surged up in her. She felt sorry for the days of liberty she had spent with Volodya, the days they had done their work of red terror, the great and holy work. And as if it had happened the day before, she recalled the sunlit Podyacheskaya Street, Prokhor's grey racer, the bags full of money, serious-eyed Freze, the horses covered with blood, and Volodya, big, angry-faced, making abrupt gestures. She recalled how cleverly he had thrown the money out of the carriage, and how she had put it away in their buggy; how, the same evening, Volodya, happy and jubilant, had counted the spoils in her room. She could even hear the ring of the silver coins and see the gold and the bills.

The door was breaking in. It began to give under the weight of heavy shoulders. Some one was cursing:

"Break it! Break it! Break it!"

Olga stepped away from the door towards the window. She saw the yellow muslin partition, the bluish electric bulb, the white newspaper on the green table with the staring headline, "Death of the murderer Gliebov."

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Olga squeezed into the narrow space between the table and the closet with its mirror-doors. She no longer thought of Volodya, and she had no pity for herself. Tall in her black dress, her face very weary, her back against the wall, she looked wide-eyed and unfalteringly at the door. Then she half closed her eyes, knit her dark eyebrows, held her breath, raised the little revolver, and placed the muzzle to her breast.

"It's all the same. All—all the same—" Her pale lips whispered it for the last time. Without hesitating a moment, she pulled the trigger. The air filled with grey smoke.

When the colonel of gendarmes entered the room, his sword clanking, and the officers ran in after him, Olga, looking as if she were alive, lay on her back, her head towards the window. Her eyes were closed, her hair dishevelled, but there was no sign of blood. The revolver was on the floor, its muzzle still smoking.

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CHAPTER XIX

MISHA'S family learned of his death about Christmas time through belated papers from the capital. Nikolay Stepanovich locked himself in his study, and stayed there without eating or sleeping for three days. Driver Tikhon went to the district town Zubkov for the doctor, but Nikolay Stepanovich got angry, scolded Tikhon and Natasha, and ordered them not to let "the fool of a doctor" cross the threshold. Natasha, stifling her sobs, kept running on tiptoe from her father's study to her mother's bedroom. Tatyana Mikhailovna cried all night long, and in her white night-gown, her hair in braids, kneeled for hours at a time praying before the ikons with their burning candles. She was growing grey and old and feeble in a few hours.

The life of the house was disorganized. The maids Lukerya and Sasha sat in their room yawning and doing nothing. The manager, Aleksey Antonovich, a bald, stout, bearded fellow, would come, take off his cap, ask in whispers about the health of the family, sigh in pity, cross himself, and go back to his office, trying not to make any noise with his squeaking boots. Malanya Petrovna, the sharp-nosed housekeeper with mouse-like eyes, ran about in her swishing, starched skirt, into the maid's room, into the kitchen, the dining-room, the bedroom, sighing, groaning, whispering, and begging Natasha to take pity on her beauty and go to sleep. On

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the fourth day came the pastor, Father Vasily, a good-looking elderly man with thick red hair, and with him the drunkard deacon Agafon. They filled the big colonnaded reception room with the odour of incense, and lighted thin waxen candles. Tatyana Mikhailovna wept and beat her head on the floor, and Nikolay Stepanovich, straight and haggard in his general's uniform, gazed indifferently at the smoking censer and the deacon's little beard. After that rite, life entered its accustomed groove, and the gloomy days went on in slow procession. But now Tatyana Mikhailovna's back was bent, and Nikolay Stepanovich was more irritable and excitable than ever. And, as usual, there was no letter from Andrey.

In May, when the lilies of the valley began to bloom and the violets to turn blue, and the fields were covered with pale green oats and winter grains, their oldest son, Aleksandr, returned from his imprisonment in Japan. His arrival enlivened the dead house, but did not lessen the family grief. Often, as Tatyana Mikhailovna looked with motherly attention at his strong, sunburned face with its forceful chin, straight black moustaches, blue eyes with the ironical gleam in them, his broad shoulders and slender, almost feminine hands and long fingers, she would forget it was her oldest son. It would seem to her that she was looking upon her eighteen year old Misha, her ruddy, blue-eyed boy, so lively and unreasoningly happy. She would get up from the couch, and without looking at Natasha, would go with uncertain steps into her dark bedroom with its smell of drugs, bow low before the ikon, whisper her prayers, and then spend the long night unable to sleep.

Nikolay Stepanovich would question his son excitedly about details in regard to Rozhdestvensky, the flotilla,

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the Japanese, the battle of Tsu Shima, cursing the government and the revolutionists, recalling the victorious past, the Turkish campaign, Skobelev, Sheinovo, and the Green Mountains, and proudly pointing to the cross of St. George that decorated his breast.

Aleksandr listened in attentive silence, without criticism, but also without approval, as if not daring to argue with his father. Externally he appeared the same as always, quiet and inscrutable, saying little, but kind and simple. And neither Tatyana Mikhailovna nor Nikolay Stepanovich noticed the change in him, that indefinable new something which, though he was afraid to admit it even to himself, had haunted him ever since the battle of Tsu Shima.

Natasha could often see him from her window in his white coat and black cap, pacing the garden for hours at a time, with his hands clasped behind his back. He seemed to be thinking about something important and pressing. Trying in vain to find some solution, she would join him silently, with her customary inbred shyness, and walk at his side, a thin, fair-haired figure in her white dress and shawl. Aleksandr, seeing her, would frown, as if trying to chase away his irritating thoughts, and would start a conversation about something familiar and near—about mother, father, Malanya Petrovna, about the wind breaking a rosebush in the garden, about the paths being overgrown with grass, about the fading of the lilacs—and after a pause, would invite her to go driving. She would look into his cold pale-blue eyes, and then obediently order Tikhon to harness the horses.

Sometimes Nikolay Stepanovich could not restrain himself, and in his painful yearning for Andrey he

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would begin to talk long and excitedly about traitors, "the long-haired ones," the "disrespectful sons," "the new sort of people," saying there was no love for the Fatherland, no obedience to authority, no fear of God, and the revolution ought to be put an end to. Nobody contradicted him. Tatyana Mikhailovna silently shook her grey head. Natasha looked pleadingly and fearfully at her angry father, and Aleksandr maintained his puzzling silence and supported the conversation so unwillingly that Nikolay Stepanovich once looked at him severely and said:

"Why are you silent, Aleksandr? Don't you agree with me?"

"Agree about what, Papasha?"

Nikolay Stepanovich got up, tall and heavy, with the ruddiness of a sturdy old age in his cheeks, and said, choking with indignation:

"I speak about those persons, about the gentlemen revolutionists, about the revolts, about *Potiomkin,* about *Ochakov,* about the *Memory of Azov,* about the uprising —and where?—in Moscow. Just think! In Moscow!" he ended with a childish, helpless sob. "About the scandalous murders, yes, the murders. About the fact that Russia is perishing!"

"I don't know about these things, Papasha," said Aleksandr turning towards the window.

"You don't know? You don't know? And what happened in Japan? What happened in Japan? In Japan, in the presence of Japanese soldiers, who were reading booklets, who were spreading propaganda, without any sense of shame, any remorse? You yourself told me about it. Or didn't you? No?"

"Yes, you're right. I did."

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"Well, there, there, you see? And you tell me, you don't know about these things. What are you? Aren't you an officer of the Russian navy? Aren't you a defender of the Fatherland? Or perhaps it's all the same to you? Let Russia perish. Let Misha—" Here Nikolay Stepanovich sobbed again, "Let Misha—how's that? Whose fault is it?"

Natasha stretched out her hands in alarm. Tatyana Mikhailovna got up from the couch and slowly left the room. Aleksandr thought a minute, then smiling in a conciliatory manner, said:

"It all is really terrible, Papasha."

"Well, that's just what I say," the old man hastily put in, looking forlornly around the room. "That's just what I say. It's really terrible—terrible! And whose fault is it? Whose?"

In September Aleksandr's leave of absence was over. The days were clear and soundless, spiderwebs spread over the harvested fields, and the hounds began to bay and the hunting horn to blow in the yellow linden woods. Aleksandr was spending his last days hunting, but evenings he would join the family in the billiard room. The wind would whistle outside, the birches rustle noisily. Natasha would be busy at the samovar; the room would be quiet, light, but rather sad.

Father Vasily, the good-looking priest, would come in his brown robe, sit in the low arm-chair, drink tea with cognac and sigh. Tatyana Mikhailovna would sew, while father and son would play a game of billiards.

On Sunday evening Nikolay Stepanovich and Aleksandr were playing a game together. In his unbuttoned coat covered with chalk, a big, ruddy figure of a man, Nikolay Stepanovich bent over the table, took aim

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with his hand, wrinkled but still sure, and struck. The ball fell into the pocket.

"How's that?" He turned with a bashfully triumphant smile to his son, and began to chalk his cue.

"You're playing a splendid game, your excellency," said Father Vasily in a quiet drawl, fingering the cross on his breast. "Even the young folks are no match for you."

Aleksandr bowed. His playing was so consistently poor that Natasha guessed he was losing on purpose, and nodded to him in gratitude, but meeting his quiet eyes, she flushed and looked down. Father Vasily coughed respectfully, turned to Tatyana Mikhailovna, and continued to converse with her in a low voice.

"And you will hardly believe me, mother Tatyana Mikhailovna, he has gone all wrong. He is good for nothing, that peasant. Doesn't go to church, pays no respect to the priest, and is insulting. The other day I was coming from Kurbatov. I had just turned into the big road, and there I saw Vanka the shepherd—"

"Which one is that?" asked Nikolay Stepanovich, taking aim with his cue and keeping his eyes on the green lamplighted table. "The lame one?"

"The same, the same, your excellency. The lame one. And what do you think? Eh?" Father Vasily stopped, raised his bushy eyebrows, and clasped his hands indignantly. "I hardly dare tell you. He was standing in the middle of the road and, excuse me, was committing a nuisance. I began to talk to him, to reproach him. 'Really,' said I, 'can't you see that your spiritual father is riding by?' And, imagine, he laughed out aloud, and said something. I can't repeat it."

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Tatyana Mikhailovna did not raise her head. Nikolay Stepanovich struck the ball with his cue.

"And what did he say, the scoundrel?"

"He said, your excellency," Father Vasily almost shouted, red with anger, "he said, 'Get out, while you're all there, you long-haired one!' That's what he said. How do you like it?"

"He ought to be hanged," said Nikolay Stepanovich in a hoarse voice, growing red in the face. Aleksandr cast his eyes down and lighted a cigarette. For a moment silence reigned in the room. Only the sound of the samovar and the rustling of the leaves outside could be heard.

"Some one's coming," said Natasha, rising and going out on to the porch.

Outside the dogs were barking furiously, the long-haired watch-dog Sharik in short barks, and Misha's favourite dog Vesta in a thin, sustained howl. There was no sound of wheels, but the voices of peasants could be heard outside distinctly, and lights were seen twinkling among the trees. Then the gates creaked and a door banged. Natasha returned with a telegram.

"Andrey arrested. Trial Thursday. Come at once. Counsel Ikonnikov."

Father Vasily hastily picked up his wide-brimmed hat, and stole out of the room without taking leave. The dogs kept up their barking.

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CHAPTER XX

CELL No. 17, where Bolotov was confined, was a high, gloomy room of solid old-fashioned construction. The narrow, grated window looked out upon a high grey wall, from which the plaster had scaled exposing the brick. Here and there, between the red bricks, green moss showed, and on the top of the wall, at the very edge, hung a pale bluebell. The sun never penetrated into the fortress. It was always dark, quiet and damp. The death-like stillness exhausted Bolotov on the very first day.

He was sound asleep, when the iron bolt clattered, the key clicked in the lock, and two soldiers tramped into the cell. One of them, an old gendarme with a shaking white head, Bolotov had seen before. When he had been brought to the fortress in his blood-stained jacket, wounded and beaten, and had come to consciousness on the cold damp floor of the prison corridor, for a moment not knowing where he was, it was this gendarme who had helped him up and brought him some hot tea. The other was a corporal, lean and tall, with a wiry neck and a dull gloomy face. He came close to the cot, and bent over Bolotov. His breath smelled of vodka and tobacco.

"Dress!" he said gruffly.

Bolotov was seized by an unpleasant, even painful feeling. What pained him was not that the door was locked, that gendarmes were on guard, that armed

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strangers were around him though he was undressed and had no desire to see them, and that the trial was scheduled for that day. He felt unpleasant because the soldier was angry and gruff, and his eyes wicked and haughty.

"It's in their interest, and they don't understand. They don't want to understand." Bolotov heaved a sigh as he put on his jacket and thought of the coming trial. Though he knew he would surely be convicted, it seemed improbable that this day, Thursday, officers unknown to him yet clothed with authority, would hold a short discussion concerning himself as a mere matter of form and would then render a verdict, that is, would announce and have it put on record that he must be killed.

"They'll hang me. Funny." Bolotov smiled, and began to rehearse the speech he had so carefully prepared. Here behind the prison bars, in the solitude of soundless night, he forgot all insults and differences of opinion. Now Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg, Vera Andreyevna, the squad, the committee, the whole Party were all one family to him sharing a life of common interests, and he was in duty bound, not only to die ungrudgingly, but also to bear witness to the strength of the family. These thoughts gave him courage. In them he found solace, and in the conviction that he was doing his duty. So he repeated to himself the words he was going to say at his trial, among the "bitter enemies," "in the enemy's camp," with one foot in the grave. He got up and looked at the soldiers, a challenge in his eyes. The tall corporal had the same haughty expression. The old gendarme shook his head.

"Mister, you forgot your cap."

In the dark, resounding corridor stood a platoon of

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soldiers of the guard, with guns and attached bayonets. The corridor smelled of barracks, cheap tobacco, and sweat. A young officer with a silver belt tinkled his sword.

"March!" he cried, without looking at Bolotov.

The soldiers started in measured steps, their heavy tread resounding in the corridor. At that moment it came to Bolotov that his speech would be unconvincing and superfluous. All these men, from the erect officer down to the awkward soldier walking at his right, who were throwing indifferent glances at him, were doing their customary, boring, sickening work. For them he was not Bolotov, not a member of the Party, not an emancipator of Russia, not the murderer of the hateful prosecutor, but one of those governmental objects which they are obliged to watch, to take care of, to accompany to the bath-house and to the court, and to hand over on the issuance of a warrant. Should he be hanged tomorrow, he would be forgotten, not only by the trained soldiers, but also by the Supritkins, Strelovs, and Porfiryches, and perhaps even by Arseny Ivanovich, Doctor Berg and Vera Andreyevna. With bent head he followed them obediently to court.

Previously when he had thought of arrest and trial, he had fancied it something great and terrible, something that one must prepare oneself for diligently and prayerfully, something that would exact superhuman strength and would serve as a measure of life. But prison, arrest, and the tiresome expectation of death he found were simpler, more colourless and more uninteresting than they were conceived to be and written about. Fortress-like walls covered with moss, a solitary bell-flower, a stone floor, an opening in the door, dinner at

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twelve o'clock, a decrepit gendarme with a shaking head, a young sub-lieutenant, marching soldiers. It was all so simple, so much like barracks, so devoid of solemnity and brilliancy that one could not think of being afraid of it. Only it was rather strange and unpleasant to be led along a dusty corridor between twinkling bayonets and have somebody dispose of his life. But even this feeling gave him no fear.

Again the iron lock snapped. Bolotov was led into a clean five-cornered yard, paved, and with a little flower bed. He caught sight of the blue sky, the cold sun, and he heard the twittering of sparrows. He felt a longing for liberty, as one feels a longing for fields in the spring. He felt lonesome and sad. He was seized by a desire to see the Neva, Vanya, and Ippolit, the window of the tobacco store, and the noisy Liteiny Prospect. But his desire died as quickly as it had come. The soldiers halted before an unpainted oak door, and an officer called:

"Attention!"

The trial was held in a low room with a portrait of the Czar on the wall and a big green table. Bolotov sat on a bench. To his right and left the soldiers stood erect. The one with the round indifferent face kept on looking at him. In the corner near the door sat the colonel of gendarmes writing rapidly. The room was quiet. Only a fly was buzzing and the pen squeaked.

"Quicker! Quicker!" thought Bolotov with irritation. Then he recalled what had happened the day before. His mother had entered his cell, and a colonel of gendarmes, who smelled of perfume, had obligingly offered her a chair. Bolotov saw her, grey and old, in a black scarf, stretching out her weak hands. Her breast

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began to tremble. Natasha breathed heavily, and he, forlorn and stifling sobs, without knowing what to say, kept repeating one short phrase: "Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry." But the colonel made a noise with his sword and boomed: "The visit is over. Take him away." At the recollection of this Bolotov felt a rage of indignation. "Oh, the scoundrels! Scoundrels!" he muttered, panting.

The soldier with the round face thumped his gun on the floor and looked at him perplexed.

"Yes, of course, scoundrels. And Sliozkin? Didn't Sliozkin's wife cry? Didn't she plead at my feet? Didn't she kiss my feet in mortal anguish? Didn't she plead for mercy? Oh, it's all the same." He made a despairing motion with his head. "Let them try me."

"Andrey Nikolayevich."

Bolotov raised his eyes. Ikonnikov, with a clean-shaven, worn, yellowish face and in a black frock-coat with a portfolio under his arm, shook his hand affectionately:

"There have been cases—don't feel embarrassed, my angel. The Party looks up to you. What, the Party? The whole of Russia! And perhaps—where doesn't the devil take a hand? I don't want to give you false hopes, but there have been cases—once, I remember, in Odessa—"

Bolotov smiled.

"What for, *cher maitre*? Didn't you yourself say we lie from morning till night—ha?"

Ikonnikov adjusted his pence-nez.

"True, my angel, true. And it's no use talking. The tongue really has no bones. Rosenstern sends you greetings." Then he began to whisper hurriedly in a

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changed voice: "The impression is great, colossal! Ah, my dear man, Andrey Nikolayevich. Ah—" He shook off a tear furtively. Bolotov made no reply.

"The court is coming! Rise! Hats off!"

Through wide-open side doors the judges filed in. First came a grey general of imposing figure, in a tight-fitting uniform, swaying as he walked and knitting his heavy brows. He tried to look solemn, stern and impartial. But his tired, good-natured eyes and the uncertain motions of his large red hands showed that he was preoccupied with his own interests and it made no difference to him whom and for what he would try. He was followed by a short round man with a little flaxen beard and a military uniform, wearing glasses and a cross of St. George on his breast. The third judge was lean, bony, and long-legged. He had the gruff face of an official, and, as Bolotov noted, he wore a gold bracelet on his wrist.

Their slow quiet motions revealed to Bolotov that to them, too, he was merely a governmental object and the trial—an act of mercy and justice— was merely an every day event that rather bored them. The speech he had prepared would appear degrading and ridiculous. Before it had seemed out of place and pitiful.

"Anyway, the verdict has been fixed already. And why is Ikonnikov here?" he thought with exasperation. "If I'm to be hanged, then let them hang me! There is no need to talk."

The grey judge, who presided, coughed, looked up absentmindedly at the high ceiling, and said:

"Your name, surname, and title?"

Bolotov made no answer. The judge closed his eyes and repeated the question. Receiving no response again,

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he looked indifferently at Bolotov and bent over to the little judge. Ikonnikov, pale, excited, and angry, whispered pleadingly:

"What are you doing? Answer! Answer!"

"You don't care to answer?" asked the general drily and contemptuously. Bolotov nodded. The colonel of gendarmes winked, adjusted his silver shoulder-knot, and began to write hurriedly.

While the ugly, pock-marked secretary of the high-sounding name Caruso read the charge, swallowing the words, Bolotov did not once look at the judges. He was seized by a feeling of hatred. It was not important to him by whom he was being tried, what the verdict would be, and what the counsel would say; whether he would be hanged or not, and how many more hours he had yet to live; or what the Party would think, and Russia, Arseny Ivanovich, Vanya, and the committee. One thing was important, that he, Bolotov, a free man, had been brought there forcibly by armed men, into that dark hall where Caruso was reading, where some judges were sitting, a gendarme was writing hurriedly, and rifles were shining. He felt like shouting that nobody, neither the presiding judge, nor his associates, nor the soldiers, nor the young officer, nor the ministers had the right to kill him, a free man. He clenched his teeth, the colour rushed from his cheeks, and he wrung his fists.

The prosecutor was saying something uninteresting and incoherent, the secretary was muttering something, and the associate judges were whispering to each other. Bolotov heard nothing. He gathered all his conscious will power for one purpose, not to shout, not to say insulting words, to bear the trial with dignity.

The presiding judge made an effort to get up from his

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chair and read the verdict in a solemn voice, accenting the words. Ikonnikov lost his composure, the soldiers straightened up, and Bolotov, without looking at the judges, turned and with a firm step, followed the young officer out of the room.

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CHAPTER XXI

WHEN Bolotov returned to his cell, No. 17, and had changed his clothes for the blue prison garb and had put on the high wooden-soled prison slippers, and the gendarmes had gone out with a loud bang of the door, he walked slowly to the grated window and looked out, trying to get a glimpse of the sun, but in vain. The only things to be seen were the gloomy cracked wall, the red spots of bricks, and the bell-flower with its quivering transparent petals. The wind must have been blowing.

"A bell-flower! And down on our estate there are many flowers," Bolotov thought, and his heart began to pound. He was seized by a desire to see his mother and father, and sister, and Sasha's quiet, pale blue eyes for only one minute. "Sasha! Where is Sasha? Mamma says he is here in St. Petersburg, and sends me kisses. Sasha kisses me?" he whispered, on the verge of tears. But the tears did not come. The little opening in the door winked like an eye, and an unseen some one kept watching through it, long and curiously. "Oh, the scoundrels, scoundrels! What do they want?" Bolotov dropped his head and began to pace the cell.

"What was I thinking of a while ago? Oh, yes, about Sliozkin and the judges. I killed and I shall be killed. One who has raised the sword shall perish by the sword. Will they really kill me? Me? Today? Kill? What does the word mean? Kill? They'll lead me out of the cage, and like a sheep—like a sheep—No!"

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"And I prayed to the image of Christ,
And I made low bows to all sides,
Pray, forgive me, oh, people of God,
And say prayers for my sins,
For my big, heavy sins!
And I had no time to look at the people
Before they cut my wild head off,
Down to the very powerful shoulders."

He recalled the words that he had read somewhere, and suddenly felt relieved.

"I'm not the only one, not the first nor the last. Seriozha and Zheliabov, and Pestel, and Pugachov, and Stenka Razin. Why Stenka Razin? What have I in common with Stenka Razin? 'Pray for my sins.' But nobody will pray. And I? Can I pray? I can't and I don't want to. Don't want to, don't want to. If life is so made that a helpless man can be strangled, that conscience can be violated, then I have no one to pray to. No one. I don't want to," he whispered in passion and indignation. He lay down on his cot. Far above in the chapel, the bells, out of tune, struck six o'clock, and when their last sound had died out in the fortress bastions, they began to play the hymn, "The Glory of God" sadly and solemnly. "Great is the glory of our God in Zion," Bolotov began to sing in a low voice, carefully separating the words. " 'There is no speech, there are no words. He is great in Heaven on his throne.' And the judges? I hate them, yes, I hate them."

Again the opening winked and the sound of steps was heard.

"Already?" Bolotov jumped up from his cot and felt his cheeks begin to burn feverishly. His mouth became dry.

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"No, impossible! Why, it's only six o'clock. He is great in the blades of grass on earth. God, is it really? Already?"

The iron-sheathed door opened with a rumble, the blue uniform of a gendarme gleamed in the corridor, and into the cell came a tall, well-built, very young gentleman in a black frock-coat. Bolotov noticed his white face, big nose, curly beard, diamond rings, and gold chain on his belly. The gentleman fixed his grey, kind, nearsighted eyes upon Bolotov, on his unbuttoned prison coat, and his prison shoes, and smiled in an encouraging, friendly manner. He nodded his head condescendingly.

"Andrey Bolotov? Let me introduce myself. Assistant to the Minister, Count Beloselsky. Close the door," he ordered the sentry in a commanding, almost gruff voice. "They're eavesdropping, the rascals. Are you comfortable here? It isn't damp? Not too dark?"

Bolotov looked at him in amazement, not believing his own ears and fearful for his sanity as he heard the courteous words. It was curious and uncanny and rather disgusting; and he wished this big stranger who was perhaps kind and genial, would hurry up and say all he had to say. "Will they pardon me? Yes?" went through his mind, and his knees trembled.

"Well, then, I'll get down to business. You see, I came to you at the request of his High Excellency, the Minister. Taking into consideration the great services rendered by your father, the much-respected Nikolay Stepanovich, and yielding to his entreaties, the Minister has agreed to intercede with the Emperor for mercy." Count Beloselsky stopped and paused impressively. Looking at Bolotov encouragingly, he waited for a reply. But Bolotov kept gazing gloomily at the floor, and his

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thin face with its compressed lips gave no sign of what he was thinking. His knees were still trembling, and his head was in a whirl. Count Beloselsky stopped smiling.

"Yes, with the highest authority. I am happy I can give you this information. Only, you see—" He took a paper out of his pocket. "Only, you must sign your name here. A mere formality. Have you got pen and ink? Hey, who's there? Pen and ink! Hurry!"

Bolotov's cheeks flushed a dull red and his mouth grew dry. "They want to disgrace me. To disgrace the squad!" Bolotov thought, and answered firmly:

"I thank you. I will not sign the paper."

The Count thought a moment:

"Listen, Andrey Nikolayevich. What are you trying to do? You're ruining yourself—irreparably. You are young, your life is still ahead of you. If you don't care about yourself, think of your parents. What grief you're causing them! Think of your mother."

At the mention of his mother and father, Bolotov, feeling he could no longer control himself, raised harassed eyes, saying:

"I beg of you—yes, I beg of you, leave me alone, and —and—and—don't speak of my mother. I—I—beg you to go away. Will you, please? Please go, and immediately, this very moment, you hear me? Get out of here!" His shouts became shriller and louder. Two gendarmes with clanging spurs appeared at the door. Count Beloselsky shrugged his shoulders and left the cell.

When the sound of steps died away, Bolotov lay face downward on his pallet, drawing his cloak about him and trying not to think. It was growing dark, and the

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lights were not yet lit, and it was still, so still, and the pounding of his temples seemed like heavy footsteps. And so he lay motionless in the dark, without thought, or words, or hope, but only in overwhelming agony of spirit till the chimes sounded the evening prayers. They came to him indistinctly stifled by the walls of the fortress. And then he heard singing.

Bolotov sat up, his palms resting on his knees, and his head bowed. He was not thinking. He was utterly, painfully tired, and felt a great desire to fall asleep. He made an attempt to sleep, but the electric light was suddenly turned on, and he blinked his eyes. On the moment he recalled everything that had been haunting him the last few days, and tried in vain to forget. It was not his childhood, nor his mother, nor father, nor relatives, nor the barricades, nor the committee, nor the troops, nor the day of the convention, when he had determined on his way of life—when he had resolved to kill and to die; but it was the Liteiny Prospect, the blood-covered pavements, the shattered carriage, the half-naked driver, and the round, glassy surprised-looking eye. And for the first time since he had been fighting with death, he realized, not with his mind, but with his conscience, that it was not merely a hateful old man who had been killed, but also an innocent human being, full of life and vigour, killed not by the committee, not by the Party, not by Russia, but by him and him alone. "When trees are felled, the chips fly," he muttered through his teeth, and immediately felt the meaninglessness of his self-justification. And as from a high mountain one can see the great steppe in the distance, with here and there the roofs of scattered houses, the contented herds with their shepherds, and beyond the

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river glistening in the sun woods and the ripe fields of grain, so did Bolotov on the eve of his execution see many things that had been hidden from him all his life. He saw that even death of one's own choosing cannot act as redemption for murder, that a murderer cannot redeem himself even with his own blood, and if kill one must and may, then it is impossible and unnecessary to seek for justification. He saw that he had had to kill, and that neither articles about the use of terror, nor hatred, nor love, nor revenge, nor anger had made him raise his sword, but that a higher unknown force, millions of causes and hundreds of bygone years had brought him to commit murder. And he also saw—and this was the most valuable thing—that it was more difficult to kill than to die, and he was happy to understand that death was desirable and not terrifying. He felt no remorse and no regret, but only a clear, quiet feeling, peaceful as deep waters. "I have killed and I shall be killed. All are right and all are wrong. There are no innocent and no guilty ones. There are two mortal, thousand-year-old enemies, and nobody on earth can act as judge over them. It is not given to us to know. But even on the eve of death, before I breathe my last, here where no one can see me and no one can hear me, I, Andrey Bolotov, sentenced to death by hanging, say and say it with solemn faith, 'Long live Liberty, long live the great Russian people!'"

Bolotov did not notice that the evening had passed and night had come. He did not lie down but paced the room without resting, stumbling in his long prison clothes. He thought of nothing, only felt he had no fear in his heart, and so was happy. It was late, the clock struck three, but all was quiet in the corridor.

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"Is it possible that I shall live tomorrow? All day! My God, all day!" he asked himself with a secret hope, and suddenly stopped. Far away at the other end of the corridor he heard a noise. It came nearer and grew louder. It was clear that many people were coming to him in the night, and that immediately the thing would take place which he could never imagine, that inexplicable and terrible thing which a moment ago he had not feared, but even desired. "They? Yes, they," he whispered, as a cold sweat broke out over his whole body, and suddenly bending like a cat, he jumped to the wall and seized hold of his cot with all his strength. He did not notice the entry of the colonel of gendarmes, nor did he notice how white his face was, how timid the motions of his men. He did not know what they said to him, did not see the grey uniforms, the priest, gendarmes, and a broad-shouldered, hairy man in a red blouse. He came to himself when he was already in the paved yard, in the midst of a faded flowerbed, in the corner near a water-pipe. Above him was the endless, black, star-filled sky, the Big Dipper and the Milky Way split in two. The air was cold. Around him were people, very many people. They stood in a huddled, frightened crowd and looked with fixed eyes straight into his own. And, as he caught their look, Bolotov waved his cap, and without hesitation, without believing himself, he went up the platform. The hairy hangman in the red blouse threw the shroud over him and tightened the noose. The clock struck five.

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PART THREE

CHAPTER I

AUTUMN passed, then winter, and the spring days came again, and blood was still being spilled, and the sanguinary battle of brother against brother was not yet over. The government was still trying, hanging, and shooting, and sending punitive expeditions. The revolutionists were still plotting uprisings, printing proclamations, organizing the Workmen's Party and throwing bombs at ministers. But to every one, officials, students, and Party members, troopers and soldiers, what they had not seen before was now clear, that the revolution had lost its force and the government was victorious. Numberless arrests followed. Arrests were as steady now as autumn rain. The police seemed to know everything, the most secret secrets of the Party. In December Ippolit was suddenly arrested on the street in St. Petersburg and a month later was hanged. The Union of the Army was destroyed. The sailors of the Guard were seized and shot. A student who had come from Moscow and was known only to Doctor Berg and Rosenstern was arrested with a bomb in his hands. A collection of ammunition beyond the Nevsky Prospect was discovered and confiscated.

These symptoms were disquieting to the comrades. Rosenstern knitted his brows and refused to answer any questions. Vera Andreyevna grew thinner and yel-

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lower, and complained of the lack of secrecy and discipline. Arseny Ivanovich sighed, shook his grey head, and said by way of consolation: "Never mind, benefactors, it happens. Broken dishes last for centuries." Yet all of them, Gruzdiev, Rosenstern, Vera Andreyevna, Zalkind, and Arseny Ivanovich, had a feeling that treachery was lurking nearby, perhaps in their very midst, in the committee. The most awful thing was not to be able to discover it.

The enormous Party, scattered throughout Russia, only recently so terrifying and so faith-inspiring, was losing its strength, just as a beast hunted by dogs becomes weak and powerless. This weakness, this foreboding of defeat, manifested itself not only on the surface, in the committee, but in every city, in every workmen's circle, in every student's group, in every little organization, in every detail of daily life. The "District Republics" existed no more, the numerous meetings took place no more. There were no strikes. There were no spontaneous, unplanned assassinations. On the contrary, gendarmes were everywhere, and they made arrests without cause and without discrimination. The machine was running unevenly, and the bond that united the comrades was wearing away. Somewhere in the Party, in its distant branches, timid voices were heard saying there was treachery in the committee and some one had sold out the defeated revolution. But the rumours were indistinct and unsupported. The committee knew of them, but did not dare to believe them.

Aleksandr Bolotov entered the Party in November. On returning from imprisonment in Japan in the summer, he had already made up his mind he must no longer serve in the army. To do so, he felt, would be to com-

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mit an irreparable, unpardonable mistake. He himself could not have told just when the profound change took place that made a terrorist of him, whether it was in Libau at the sailing of the fleet, or in Nosibe when Nobogatov arrived, or on the Yellow Sea, when they were waiting for the Japanese or in prison in Kioto. Every day of the painful campaign he lived in thoughts of his fatherland, of Russia, of her unheard-of disgrace. He saw thousands of vigorous youths inspired by love for their Czar, giving their lives ungrudgingly in defence of the flag of Andrey. Nevertheless Russia was beaten, disgraced, ruined; the greatest sacrifices had been made in vain. Drop by drop, like a slow poison, the stunning belief distilled itself into him that his duty was to fight for his Fatherland, but not on the ocean, not at the cannon, but at home, in the midst of the Party struggling for "land and freedom." It was not an idle attraction, a thoughtless fascination, which takes hold of weak, dissatisfied people in certain decisive moments. It was a ripe determination to die for the people, a determination bought with blood, a conviction that he could not live without serving Russia. When he learned of Andrey's arrest, he left for St. Petersburg with his mother and Natasha. In St. Petersburg he found Rosenstern, who received him with open arms.

It was towards the end of April that Aleksandr was for the first time invited to a meeting of the committee. He was not overjoyed, nor did he consider it a great honour that he, a recent officer and a new-comer in the Party, should be initiated into Party secrets. The procedure seemed natural and proper. He was risking his life for the Party, therefore he should have a share in the discussion of questions of importance.

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The same representative members of the intangible committee met at Valabuyev's house on the Kammenoöstrovsky Prospect as had met there a year and two years before. They were all on hand, as if there had been no revolution, no scaffolds, no terror, no uprisings, and no prisons. Aleksandr looked at them with respect. He believed he was looking upon the general staff—that mysterious managing staff which knew of no military honours, no red tape, no envy, no competition, and no disgraceful intrigue. And he was happy in the thought that he was serving a just, dignified cause, hand in hand with brave, well-tried people.

When Valabuyev turned his back and his red neck and left the room on tiptoe, closing the heavy door behind him, Doctor Berg began in a dry, matter-of-fact voice:

"Messieurs, we have gathered today to discuss an important, I may say, an exceptionally important matter. You know that lately many arrests have taken place, and under circumstances that arouse suspicion. I draw no conclusions. I am merely pointing out a fact. Yesterday I received the following letter:"

He paused, reached out his long white hand, and took a crumpled sheet from the table. The big room with its pictures and velvet rugs was filled with people. On the couch, under a portrait of Tolstoy, sat Rosenstern, with half-closed eyes and head thrown back on the cushion. His sharp Jewish face with its curly little beard was quiet and stern, as if he knew exactly what Doctor Berg was about to say. Arseny Ivanovich was leaning his elbows on the embroidered cloth of the table. His bowed head and the veins standing out on his neck were signs that he was sorely distressed. The faces of

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Zalkind, Vera Andreyevna, Aliosha Gruzdiev and the others unknown to Aleksandr expressed curiosity and that peculiar feverish excitement which seizes people when faced by a sudden, unavoidable calamity. Doctor Berg wiped his glasses carefully and began to read:

"Comrades! There is a provocateur among you. He exposed the terrorist known by the name of Ippolit, he gave information about the concealing of ammunition beyond the Nevsky Prospect, he made known the presence of Arkady Rosenstern in St. Petersburg, he revealed the headquarters of the committee. Take care. Expect many arrests. Search for the provocateur near you. Burn this letter. Your well-wisher."

Doctor Berg stopped and asked:

"Messieurs, does anybody want to say anything?"

Aleksandr slowly raised his cold, pale blue eyes. Doctor Berg, tall, erect, shaven, with a green neck-tie and a high collar that reached up to his ears, was carelessly waving the letter about, and looking at the comrades with a searching and, as it seemed, ironical look. One might have thought he knew who the provocateur was and remained silent merely because he was loathe to provoke untimely quarrels. Aleksandr was surprised. It was difficult to believe there should be a traitor in the Party, among people who loved the revolution with all their hearts, among the blameless, well-tried committee. He looked at Doctor Berg again in embarrassment, trying vainly to understand the insulting puzzle. Doctor Berg rolled the letter into a neat tube, put it in his pocket, and repeated:

"Who wants the floor, comrades?"

The room was well-lighted and the sparkling crystal lamp threw an even pale glow over the Venus of Milo,

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the comrades, the rugs, the pictures and the mirrors. Everybody was silent, nobody trusted himself, each one was afraid of saying a careless word, was afraid of insulting, degrading thoughts. Finally, after long hesitation, Arseny Ivanovich heaved a sigh, pulled at the tablecloth with trembling fingers, and began in his uneven bass voice, without looking at anybody:

"Yes, yes, my benefactors, the situation—the situation is very difficult. What's to be done? Eh? And who is this well-wisher? And—and—but no, what does it mean, anyway?" He stopped and spread out his arms. There was a pause again.

"We must have an investigation," Doctor Berg said firmly.

"An investigation? Of course, an investigation—" Gennady Gennadievich began excitedly, as if he had just awakened. He jumped up, ran over to Doctor Berg, coughing and choking, and began to talk hurriedly, excitedly, and angrily: "We must appoint a committee, my dear fellows. But first of all we must verify the statement. The letter is anonymous. Who wrote it? I say it was written by some one in touch, you understand, in touch with the police. No one but a person in touch with the police, a policeman, a provocateur, or a spy, could be acquainted with Party affairs, or could know of the committee headquarters. But if the letter was written by a member of the police—" He paused, quieted down, lowered his voice mysteriously, and ended in measured, emphatic words: "If the letter was written by a member of the police, then can't we admit the hypothesis, a mere hypothesis, of course, that the letter is not in the interests of the Party?"

"In other words?" Rosenstern asked gloomily.

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"In other words, isn't it proper to assume that the writer of the letter wrote it in his own interests?"

"What could be his purpose?"

"Well, I cannot explain that, my dear—" Gennady Gennadievich coughed again, grasping at his chest. "What do you want? I am not a police official. I don't know the soul of a secret service man. I merely think the document is not sufficient proof that we have a provocateur in our midst."

Though what Gennady Gennadievich had said was not clear or convincing, and could not assuage the comrades' apprehension, and though each one deep down in his heart realized that the cleverly-worked out hypothesis was absurd, still they felt relieved and began to talk excitedly, all at the same time. Rosenstern alone kept quiet, and his frown deepened; and Aleksandr, controlling his growing anger, sat patiently awaiting the final decision.

"I can't agree with the comrade," Doctor Berg replied very loudly, making himself heard above the noise, and fixing his tie with a careless motion.

"*Les affaires sont les affaires.* We have received a letter, and though it's anonymous, still it's a document. We must assume that one of us is a provocateur. The Party's responsibility is too great—" He paused, looked about the room with a rapid ironical glance, and finished drily:

"I demand an investigation."

Gruzdiev, who was sitting alone in a corner of the room, rose resolutely from his chair at the last words. His kind Russian face flushed, and his voice trembled with outrage.

"Messieurs, I can't understand it, by God. Are we

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not ashamed? Either we have faith in one another, or —or—we can suspect anything, the devil knows what! If we trust one another, we must burn this letter, yes, burn it, throw it into the stove. If, however, any one can entertain the thought that one of us—one of us—is a provocateur, then—then we must dissolve the committee. I have faith in everybody. I want everybody to have faith in me. Otherwise it's a shame and a disgrace. One cannot work in such a way. I can't. Do what you will, but I can't."

And he left the room with a bang of the door. Arseny Ivanovich shook his head in compunction.

"Yes, as you make your bed, so you must lie upon it. What's to be done, benefactors?"

Late at night, after tiresome, fruitless discussion, Aleksandr, angry at the committee's lack of power to defend itself against treachery, surprised at the helplessness of the comrades, and himself at a loss how to prevent the approaching disaster, was putting on his coat in the anteroom. He was joined by Rosenstern, and by the expression of Rosenstern's sorrowful eyes, determined walk, and steady silence throughout the evening, Aleksandr judged that he wanted to speak to him. They left the house together. The day dawned. A pale red flushed the heavens, and beyond the Nevsky sparkled the spires of the Isaaky Church.

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CHAPTER II

THEIR steps made a loud knocking on the granite pavement, and their long blue shadows followed them. The sun was rising. Over the Neva the translucent fog was lifting. In the whirling mist shimmered the white bastions of the fortress. The French quay was empty. Rosenstern took Aleksandr's arm, bent towards him, and asked softly:

"Well, what have you got to say, Aleksandr Nikolayevich?"

Aleksandr was lost in thought for a minute. Here on the bank of the Neva, under the sparkling rays of the sun, it all seemed an absurd dream, as if no evening meeting had actually taken place. He felt ashamed and embittered when he thought of the committee, and he was embarrassed by a sense of his own helplessness—of naïve unpreparedness and childish credulity. Moreover, he was utterly disgusted at the thought of the police and gendarmes. Angry at himself and unpleasantly aware of being stealthily observed by Rosenstern, he said gruffly, without turning his head:

"I don't know who the provocateur is."

"Don't you even suspect?"

"I don't suspect."

"But he was present at the meeting," Rosenstern replied softly. In spite of himself a shiver ran through Aleksandr's body.

When Doctor Berg was delivering his speech, and

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later, when Aliosha Gruzdiev was voicing his indignation, and Vera Andreyevna was silently showing her contempt, and Gennady Gennadievich was "analysing" the situation, Aleksandr had experienced an uncomfortable sensation, as if right there, in Valabuyev's house, near him, at the very same table, was sitting the provocateur, the man who had sold them all out. He did not trust his feelings, unwilling to believe that for money a man could deliver his people up to be hanged. But now, when Rosenstern had finally voiced his own thought, it struck him with full force that it was no mistake, that Vera Andreyevna, or Aliosha Gruzdiev, or Doctor Berg, or Zalkind, or perhaps Rosenstern himself was the traitor, the Judas about whom the letter had warned them. Feeling unpleasantly chilled, he stopped and asked hoarsely:

"About whom are you speaking?"

Rosenstern smiled.

"You don't know?"

"No."

"Wait a quarter of an hour."

They passed the Aleksandrov Park in silence, and turned into Voznesensky Street. The stores were closed, but on the corner of Officer Street a saloon was still open. Rosenstern pushed open the swinging glass door. At one of the tables was a man who rose respectfully to greet him. The man was small and slender, had a snub nose and thin, colourless hair. His manner had something servile about it, and he seemed half dazed as if he had no faith in himself and felt nobody else had faith in him either. He might have been taken for a waiter, a police clerk, or an office clerk out of a job. He smiled timidly, bowed, and extended his hand.

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"My respects, Arkady Borisovich! I was beginning to think you couldn't come." He gave Aleksandr a swift sidewise glance that took him in from head to foot. "And this, I think, is Aleksandr Nikolayevich, Mr. Bolotov? My respects, Mr. Bolotov."

"How do you know me?" Aleksandr asked in surprise, speaking in the familiar way one uses to servants, and with a look of disgust on his face.

"Why shouldn't I know you? Not to know you would be not to know my superiors. Who doesn't know you, if you please? As soon as you left military service and joined the revolutionary party, the secret service got orders to keep you under watch—a thorough surveillance."

"What sort of a surveillance?"

"A thorough one."

"Thorough?"

"Yes."

"What does that mean?"

Aleksandr could not fathom to whom he was speaking and why Rosenstern had brought him there. The procedure was disgraceful, he thought, and perhaps absurder than the speeches of the night previous. He turned slowly to Rosenstern. Rosenstern was pulling at his beard and observing the detective with a sharp quiet look, as if weighing his every word and gesture.

"What does this mean?" Aleksandr repeated.

"It means that we know absolutely everything. May I have a cigarette? *Merci.* Have you not noticed a public hack near your house? At the corner of Voskresensky and Furshtadskaya Streets?"

"There are many hacks standing there."

"Perhaps you've noticed the number?"

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"No, I haven't noticed the number."

"Oh, my, how can you be like that?" He shook his head in disapproval and smacked his lips. "Believe me, it deserves your attention. Why, it's our hack-driver Leonty of the secret service, No. 1351. And may I ask you, is your maid hired by your landlady?"

"Yes, by my landlady."

"Is her name Masha—yes?"

"Yes, Masha. Why?"

"Because she is Masha, but also one of our people. Belongs to the secret service—Masha of the secret service."

"Well, Tutushkin, that will do. We know it all very well without you. Get down to business," Rosenstern interrupted impatiently. "Have you found anything out?"

"But he was asking me," Tutushkin interjected. Aleksandr looked at his colourless hair, his dirty, shining coat, and his thin, curled moustachios, and again showed his disgust in the expression of his face."

"You're lying. Why haven't I been arrested yet?"

"I am lying?" Tutushkin muttered, taking offence. "I've never lied in my life. You have not been arrested yet because the colonel gave us orders."

"Which colonel?"

"The chief—Colonel von Schoen."

"All right, that's enough," Rosenstern interrupted angrily. "I'm asking you, have you found anything out?"

"I have," Tutushkin answered, his eyes down.

"Well?"

"What?"

"Well, tell us what you found out."

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"All right. Only—"

"Only what?"

Tutushkin blinked his eyes, raised his pale, browless, drunken face, and smiled slavishly.

"Only don't treat me badly, Arkady Borisovich."

"Have I ever treated you badly?"

"No. Why, no. I thank you for everything. I'm deeply touched. But the case is exceptional—I may say, it's remarkable. God forbid if the colonel finds out."

"I know. Tell me, how much?"

"Please take into consideration that my salary is only forty rubles. A man with a family—a family to support. And then, God forbid, if somebody should tell on me and the colonel should find out, what will I be? A slave and a despised worm."

"How much?"

"And then, Arkady Borisovich, I beg you to take into consideration that it was very difficult to find out. You may believe me. It was only out of sympathy to the Party and out of goodwill to you personally. You know what times these are. We're afraid of ourselves. You don't believe me? My word of honour, it's the truth."

"How much?"

Tutushkin was silent, with a thoughtful look on his face. He began to drum on the table with his fingers, and drummed for a long time, as if figuring something out and trying to figure it correctly without cheating. At last he heaved a deep sigh and said:

"As much as you'll give, Arkady Borisovich. I trust you, so help me God!"

"No, you'd better tell me."

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"Well, I don't want to make it hard for you. You ought to give me a hundred."

Rosenstern whistled softly. Tutushkin struck his hands together.

"Arkady Borisovich!"

"Well, well, I see your prices are not exorbitant."

"Arkady Borisovich, you must take into account—"

"Twenty-five."

"Twenty-five! My God, why that's cheaper than mushrooms. No, really, am I doing this for money? What is money? Phew! Mere metal, that's all. But how is it possible, Arkady Borisovich?"

Aleksandr turned pale. This bargaining with a filthy spy in a filthy saloon, bargaining over who was the traitor, seemed a vile insult to the revolution. He bent across the table to Rosenstern and said in an angry whisper:

"The devil take him! Give it to him!"

"It's Party money, my dear," Rosenstern answered unperturbed, also whispering. "Are we Rothschilds? And you must not cater to these scoundrels. You won't get rid of them. See here, Tutushkin, my last word—fifty."

"Another ten-spot, Arkady Borisovich!"

"Fifty, that's all. No use talking. If you don't want to, as you wish."

The saloon became empty. The sleepy, yawning waiters were turning out the lights. Tutushkin sighed, and drummed on the table again.

"Arkady Borisovich."

"What is it?"

"Is that a price? My word of honour—six children. Must I feed them or not?"

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"As you please."

Tutushkin got up, and with an unwilling, sorrowful expression looked about for his hat. He found it, put it on, and walked towards the door, but suddenly shook his head, turned back, and said abruptly, almost gruffly:

"Let's have the money!"

On receiving the money he counted it, put it into his pocket, and seated himself at the table.

"Well, now talk."

"There's nothing to tell."

"Well?"

"Everything is just as I told you. Of course, he is the 'sole.'"

"The sole?"

"Yes, a secret assistant."

"Speak up, you rascal, who is the provocateur?" cried Aleksandr, hardly able to control himself and clenching his fists under the table.

"The provocateur? You want to know his name?" Tutushkin smiled a servile smile. "There—the famous member of the committee, Doctor Berg." He gave a silly giggle, bowed rapidly, and made his exit into the street.

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CHAPTER III

FROM afar yet, as Aleksandr was approaching his house, he was disturbed to notice a public hack at the entrance. He glanced at the number. On the worn red plate he distinctly saw the white number, 1351. "Our hack-driver, Leonty of the secret service," he recalled the words spoken with a giggle and the feeling of pained disgust possessed him again. The door was opened by Masha. She smiled coquettishly.

"Good morning, Aleksandr Nikolayevich."

"Masha of the secret service. Fie!" He passed silently into his room, and seated himself on the couch without taking off his coat. He remained motionless a few minutes, trying to understand all that had taken place the night before. Doctor Berg with his bald head, high collar, and mysterious smile, the ambiguous anonymous letter, Arseny Ivanovich, so forlorn, the filthy saloon and the servile Tutushkin—it was all so new, so unexpected and so strange that he could hardly believe himself. He feared his memory was failing him. He passed his hand thoughtfully over his hot cheeks. Doctor Berg a provocateur! And I am not to be hanged yet, because Colonel von Schoen gave no orders. I am in the hands of the secret service spies, at the mercy of Colonel von Schoen. He can hang me or spare me at his will. Faugh! Seized by a sensation of actual physical pain he got up and walked over to the window. He had a military bearing, shoulders squared, head raised and firm steps.

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He recalled a rainy autumn night. The battleship was rolling heavily, its stern swept by the waves. The wind was blowing, the waves beating, the rain falling in torrents. In the misty distance shimmered the fires of the ship *Aleksandr*. Everything was so small, grey and dull. He was sleepy. The "dog-watch" was so long and tiresome. But suddenly the shrill sound of the silver bugle rent the howling wind. Lights signalled. And immediately the projector flashed, the heavy waves were brilliantly lighted, the decks rang with the tramping of feet, wheels rolled over the rails, the telegraph began to click in haste. With a heavy, powerful, deafening sound roared the first shot. "A submarine attack! An attack!" He caught a glimpse of the high cheekbones of the Asiatic Malaika. Again bells rang, men ran, and the ship was surrounded with a belt of fire. And then an excited voice: "How dare you shoot? Can't you see? It's a fishing-smack!"

"Yes, we were shooting at fishermen. Yes, it was a shame, a mistake, merely a mistake. But the enemy was not to be seen. Sea all around, night, and the fate of Russia. And now? Is it not the fate of Russia? Is it not a shame? And a hidden enemy again. Who? The Japanese? Admiral Togo? No. Tutushkin and Doctor Berg."

"Am I doing this for money?" he distinctly heard the servile voice with the giggle in it saying. "What is money? Metal. Forty rubles for a man with a family."

"And Rosenstern bargains with him, buys him? And Doctor Berg? *Les affaires sont les affaires.* And Doctor Berg is listened to. And Arseny Ivanovich spreads his hands helplessly. And this takes place in the Party,

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in the committee." Aleksandr's lips curled contemptuously. He threw open the double window. A smell of spring rushed into the room, a noise of the streets. Above him, between the houses, was the blue sky. Below at the gate, was the patient, watchful hack-driver, No. 1351. "Must I fight him, or Colonel von Schoen? Or Masha of the secret service?" He leaned against the window and noticed he still had his coat on. "And if one must fight, then how?"

He recalled another night, still more disgraceful, a night he could never forget even if he had wanted to. The battleship, his beloved ship, on which he had just made a trip and had fought the whole day before, was slowly going forward. The water was rough, the lights were out, the sea pitch-dark. The battleship was covered with débris, the mast was half-broken, the bridges down, the holds upset, the fires burned out, the towers dynamited, the armour bent and the iron traps twisted. Only one cannon remained untouched—the last hope and refuge. The deck was a hospital. On mattresses and stretchers lay mutilated bodies. On the floor, his bare feet under him, lay Malaika wounded, his high cheekbones and dark stained face all covered with blood. His teeth were bared. Holding his head between his hands, his body swaying and writhing, he was whining: "Water! Water! Water!" Day was dawning in the east. Far away on the horizon in the blue and sparkling haze, columns of smoke became distinguishable. One, two, three—twenty-six. Through a field-glass one could distinctly see *Meekaza, Sekko San, Fuji, Asahiga Take, Kassuga, Nishi Shima, Idzumo,* twenty-six ships, as if there had been no battle at all, as if the unfortunate *Osliabya* had not perished, as if *Suv-*

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orov had not battled like a lion, as if *Borodino* had not sunk. A lonely shot resounded on the stern and a signal was raised. And then a tugboat approached, and strange armed men climbed like monkeys up the battleship. The hateful Japanese flag was raised. "A disgrace! We could not win. We could not die. There is no justification. Well, and now will we be able to win? Or will we again shamefully beg for mercy? Not from the Japanese, but from Colonel von Schoen?" He walked away from the window and almost fell on the couch. He was seized by a feeling of utter exhaustion. He wanted to fall into a quiet refreshing sleep, to forget Tutushkin, and Tsu Shima, and the committee, to remember nothing, to think of nothing, and particularly to decide upon nothing.

Some one knocked at the door.

"Come in."

Masha entered in a white apron, with a tea tray in her hands, smiling amiably:

"Will you have some tea, Aleksandr Nikolayevich?"

It seemed to Aleksandr that it was not Masha, but that hundreds of eyes were watching and hundreds of ears were eavesdropping. It seemed to him that the whole secret service—all the colonels, provocateurs and spies, all the traitors, informers, and gendarmes—were standing behind her back and giggling like Tutushkin. He turned his face away in disgust and said:

"I don't want anything. Please leave me alone."

Masha went away offended, her starched skirt rustling. Aleksandr got up and paced the room thoughtfully. He felt indifferent now—that same feeling of contempt for danger which he had felt that night on the

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battleship before the battle. He could not have told what had caused the sudden change, but it was clear to him that no Tutushkins could embarrass him and he would not leave the Party. "If I can't stand filth," he thought coldly, "then I ought not to work for terror. I did not join the Party because I thought the revolution was powerful, but because I wanted to fight and believed my labour was needed. Then why am I hesitating now? Did I leave military service because Seniavin and Nikolay fell to the enemy? Because there was a Tsu Shima? And does faith in the Party and in the people imply faith in the infallibility of the Party committee? In the infallibility of Doctor Berg?" With a timid feeling of joy and the firm conviction that he was right, he concluded without hesitation: "I have come with the will to serve the people, the Party, and Russia. Who has the power to prevent me? Doctor Berg? Tutushkin? Von Schoen? But if I must fight them, I shall not hesitate. If it is over their dead bodies that I must win, I am certain of victory. So much the better—let the enemy be hidden, let the battle be a battle of death, not of life. And if I must fight, then Rosenstern is right. Yes, he is right. Either one must keep his snow-white purity or one must not fear any degradation. Either be sentimental like Aliosha Gruzdiev, or—or kill. There is no choice. There is no middle way. And I don't want it. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

Thus he reasoned with himself and though he was not yet rid of a secret feeling of disgust, he felt happy and relieved, as if he had at last found the right road. "The one who wants victory comes out victorious, he who fears nothing and dares to kill."

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He longed for air, for the city, for the sea, for the majestic and silent Neva. He put on his hat and went out. The haek-driver was still at the door. But Aleksandr paid no attention to him now.

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CHAPTER IV

ROSENSTERN informed the committee of his meeting with Tutushkin. His report was met with indignation. Arseny Ivanovich, Vera Andreyevna, Zalkind, and Aliosha Gruzdiev considered it a crying injustice, a slander to suspect Doctor Berg of being a provocateur. Doctor Berg's work was so faultless, he organized technical work so brilliantly, he had been a member of the committee for so long that it was terrible to assume that he, a talented, honest, experienced revolutionist should be in the service of Colonel Schoen. But it was still more terrible to admit that the faith in the Party was not justified, that at its head was a provocateur, that due to inexperience, good nature, or blindness, many people had been hanged and terror broken down. And the comrades became excited and did not dare to believe that Tutushkin was not lying. And though they thought they were defending Doctor Berg, his dignity and his honour, they were in fact defending themselves—against oppressive thoughts and painful remorse. Aliosha Gruzdiev contended hotly that "hideous slanders were demoralizing the Party." Vera Andreyevna shrugged her thin shoulders and pointed out that "all secret service men were knaves," and that to listen to them was to disgrace the committee. Gennady Gennadievich was sorry for the action of the comrades and obstinately maintained that the secret service, because of its fear of Doctor Berg, was hatching

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an intrigue, was merely trying to create dissension in the Party. But Arseny Ivanovich was most indignant of all.

"Yes, my benefactors," he complained bitterly at the meeting. "If you listen to Arkady Borisovich you get the chills in your spine. Doctor Berg a provocateur! One must approach matters thoughtfully, not in excitement, and without losing presence of mind. Well, all right. Let's assume that this fellow—what's his name—Tutushkin?—is not lying. Though I must admit it seems to me he is one of those fishermen who fish out of their own pockets. But let us assume he's not lying. Now, my benefactors, comes the question: is it not possible that this Tutushkin was honestly misled? Who is he? An ordinary government spy, a petty official, a street detective. Well, is it possible that Colonel von Schoen would tell his secrets to a spy, that he would entrust a clerk with the list of his assistants? Eh? Is it not more likely to assume that Tutushkin is simply mistaken, that he heard a ring, but doesn't know where it came from? And I tell you this, my benefactors, Doctor Berg is our comrade, a deserving worker, an honest fighter. The least hesitation, the least doubt, my benefactors, must be in his favour. Yes—yes—in his favour. I don't know who the provocateur is, but to assert that it is surely Doctor Berg is not right. No, it's not. I should never forgive myself if I suspected a comrade at the word of a spy. And I should not forgive you, Arkady Borisovich. And as to the Party, as to the suggestion that the secret service is hatching an intrigue, here is the proverb: 'People are blaming, but could not spoil, winds are blowing, but could not blow away, rains are wetting, but could not wash it away.' No rain can

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wash away the Party, and no Colonel Schoen can disgrace it. His nose is not made that way."

Rosenstern could not be convinced by his comrade's words. Assured of Aleksandr's support, he firmly demanded that Doctor Berg be put to the test. A week passed in quarrels, bitter reproaches, and indignant accusations. It was proved by facts that Doctor Berg had been spending thousands of rubles. Arseny Ivanovich still hesitated.

"How is that? After God, then money comes first?" He shook his white head in perplexity. "I can't suspect. But I can't leave it without attention. I don't know how to act."

Notwithstanding the protests of Aliosha Gruzdiev, it was decided to appoint an investigating committee. It consisted of Aleksandr, Rosenstern and Gennady Gennadievich, who still supported his saving theory of the affair.

Aleksandr had no doubt that Doctor Berg was a provocateur. To him who was not responsible for the committee and had no experience in underground work, it was clear that Tutushkin would not dare to tell a lie, and there could be no question of a police intrigue. He did not understand why an investigating committee should be appointed. Why should a suspected provocateur, who had been practically exposed be questioned or tried? A secret trial would be a half-measure, provocateurs should be treated according to martial law, as spies are treated in wartime, without mercy or loss of time.

"If Doctor Berg were in the army he would be shot in twenty-four hours," he said drily to Rosenstern. Rosenstern looked at him sideways.

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"You think so?"

"Yes, I think so."

"You're right. But what can we do? The whole Party would be aroused. We killed an innocent man, they would say, and Arseny Ivanovich would be the first one to say it."

Aleksandr had long given up living in the house with Masha of the secret service and hack-driver No. 1351. But he did not leave St. Petersburg. A sudden departure would have drawn down the suspicions of Doctor Berg. He lived without a passport now, "illegally," he slept in the houses of people who were strangers to him, but sympathizers with the cause, merchants, officials, and priests. This tramp's life exhausted him. He shrugged his shoulders in dissatisfaction.

"If I'm right, why are we waiting?"

They were sitting in the Apollo, a half-dark cellar-café on the Nevsky. The place was noisy and hot, a ladies' orchestra was playing badly, and crowds were constantly coming in and out. Rosenstern was silent, lost in thought. Aleksandr repeated his question:

"What are we waiting for?"

"What are we waiting for? Listen, Aleksandr Nikolayevich. We are members of the Party. Must we or must we not reckon with public opinion?"

"Public opinion?"

"Yes. Or do you think public opinion is a trifle? Very well. I am convinced that Doctor Berg is a provocateur. I have been observing him for the last three months. But how will you explain it to the comrades? You know we Jews in Russia have an explanation for the way Itzek turned into Isaac. Itzek is Itzkhok, Itzkhok is Isaak, Isaak is Izak, Izak is Isaac. You'll say, a let-

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ter was received. Gennady Gennadievich will explain that the letter was written by a policeman. You'll say, 'Tutushkin informed us.' Vera Andreyevna will burst out, 'The Tutushkins are scoundrels.' You'll say, 'He spent party funds.' And Gruzdiev will retort, 'Are you the keeper of the treasury?' Wonderful minds! And they are the only ones who know. And how about those who don't know, who have never heard of Tutushkin, the letter and the money? In their eyes Doctor Berg is an inviolable member of the committee. I tell you, Itzek will turn into Isaac. They will say, a torture chamber, lynch law, inquisition. Isn't that so? Won't they say so?"

"Let them."

"There, excellent! I knew you'd say that. But think a minute. Can our work possibly be built on distrust? What work could be done if there were gossip about the committee and it were called a torture chamber, if people suspected me, Arseny Ivanovich—you? Well, then, it follows we won't try Doctor Berg."

"But this is merely an investigating committee, not a court."

"Oh, my God!" Rosenstern replied in irritation, and his eyes sparkled. "And what would you have? Do you want a spy? A counsel for defence? Prosecutors? Speeches? Why, we are the Party. We have no court procedure. We can only examine Doctor Berg. And we must have him examined. It is imperative that nobody—you understand, not one man—should be able even to dream that we did not give him a chance to defend himself, and that Itzek is not Itzek but Isaac. That's all. But it's impossible to prove that Doctor Berg is a provocateur. We have no direct evidence."

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"But if we can't prove it, then we can't try him. You offer a mere formality. Don't you believe that Berg is a provocateur? You need no proof, no trial, and no discussions. Isn't that enough? And would an examination convince us of his guilt? If Berg is no fool, he will be able to arouse our sense of pity. Or while you are arguing in the committee, he will disappear, and you'll be arrested. And you know from his standpoint Berg will be right."

Rosenstern smiled.

"He won't escape us. You say, it's a mere formality. But it's not a formality, it's a voluntary concession to the needs of the Party. And be sure that acts of treachery can never be proved. Unless the provocateur confesses. Well, what can we do? You surely think" —he made a long pause and looked steadily into Aleksandr's eyes—"that I'm not bold enough, that I dare not take the responsibility? That's not true. Can't you see how few in number we revolutionists are, how few people we have who are ready to do anything? But if we are few, we will grow in numbers. We will have to grow. And in order to grow, we must reckon with all these, with Vera Andreyevna—yes, even with Vera Andreyevna. The Party can only thrive on respect, on a good name, on the influence of the masses. That's what I think. And you?"

The wretched orchestra kept up its thin music, the waiters scurried about, and hoarse voices filled the place. Aleksandr listened, and was bored by Rosenstern's sensible words.

"I joined the Party to do some work. A provocateur stands in my way and I am helpless, my hands are tied. I must reckon with Vera Andreyevna." He lighted a

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cigarette, and said harshly, watching the bluish rings of smoke:

"You know, this trial of yours is a comedy. I can't understand what's the purpose of hypotheses, arguments, and perpetual sessions. What difference does it make to me what the Countess Marie Alekseyevna is going to say? I've got a head of my own. Any one who is not a revolutionist should not remain in the party; any one who is not a soldier should not go to war. I think that is clear. The rest is red tape."

"What's to be done then? Tell me."

"What's to be done? We should end the affair."

"How?"

"No trial."

"And no examination?"

"No examination."

"But that's impossible."

"Why?"

"Because the committee will not stand for it."

They were both silent. Aleksandr now had a presentiment that Rosenstern would not dare to kill and deep in his heart still cherished the hope that Tutushkin might have lied and Berg was not working for the secret service. Doctor Berg would not be killed, Aleksandr now felt, and the vile disgrace would go unpunished. But accustomed to obeying he stifled his thoughts.

"I am a member of the Party. I submit to the verdict of the Party. I will go to the examination. But tell me, if you are convinced that Doctor Berg is a provocateur, what will you do?"

Rosenstern understood what was troubling Aleksandr. He suppressed a smile. His black youthful eyes flashed.

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"In that case we'll act according to martial law."

"And what will Vera Andreyevna say?"

"After the trial she will not say anything."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

They parted on the Nevsky. Night had fallen. Among rare clouds the first stars shimmered. Aleksandr drew a full breath.

"Yes, he will keep his promise," he thought with relief. "And if not, Doctor Berg shall be killed just the same."

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CHAPTER V

DOCTOR BERG lived on Maly Prospect, in a back house rented in his own name. The back stairs were wet, smelled of cats, kitchens and unwashed children's clothes.

"Strange! If he lives here, then what does he do with his money?" Rosenstern asked himself in embarrassment as he stopped at the head of the stairs. Aleksandr firmly pushed the bell button.

The door was opened by Doctor Berg. On seeing his comrades, he gave them a fixed look of surprise, unmingled with fear, as if he were trying to understand what had caused their sudden visit. It had never happened before that a member of the committee, contrary to discipline and the interests of secrecy, should come to his house. He turned slightly pale, rubbed his thin hands together, and asked carelessly:

"Very pleased to see you. What is it, comrades?"

"We've come in the name of the committee."

"Please be seated. What is it?"

The room in which Doctor Berg received his visitors was low, dark, as poor as a student's room, with an iron bed at the wall and an unpainted floor. Over the bed hung a portrait of Karl Marx. In the corner on a set of shelves lay a few books. Aleksandr opened a big annotated volume, and absentmindedly read the title: "The Length of the Working Day in Shops and Factories."

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"Studying the labour problem," he thought with an unkind smile. This beggarly room, the scientific books, Karl Marx, and Doctor Berg, bald-headed, and correctly dressed, seemed like derision of the deceived committee. Doctor Berg noticed his smile and adjusted his glasses nervously.

"I'm ready to listen," he said without looking at Aleksandr.

Gennady Gennadievich burst out coughing, caught at his breast, and began to mutter incoherently in his embarrassment, pronouncing the words with difficulty, as if he were asking forgiveness beforehand.

"A trifle—mere trifles. How should I explain? You will excuse me, my silver one. You see, that insinuating letter—the letter you read at the meeting—well, you know, the committee has decided to make an investigation—and honoured us greatly. The committee ordered that all the members should be questioned—including you—to prevent talk. Otherwise rumours will be spread. We knew of certain things and we paid no attention. We received a letter and threw it into the wastebasket. Oh, those rumours! I have an opinion of my own, you know. I am convinced the whole thing isn't worth a broken cent. I am convinced it's an intrigue, an adventure of Colonel Schoen. But what can you do?" He sighed, visibly affected. "The committee thinks otherwise. Don't assume anything bad, for God's sake, but just answer a few of our questions."

Doctor Berg listened very quietly, almost indifferently, with his head bent and his hands fingering the gold chain on his breast. Then he took a pencil off the table, leaned back in the wicker chair he was sitting in, and said in a loud voice:

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"Very well. Then I am to understand that the committee suspects me of being a provocateur?"

Gennady Gennadievich waved his hands in deprecation. Rosenstern raised his thick eyebrows.

"Yes, that's exactly what you are to understand. The committee suspects you of being a provocateur."

"Very well. In that case, will you be kind enough to submit the material upon which you base your suspicions?"

"The material?"

"Yes, the incriminating material."

"We will not submit it to you."

"At every trial," Doctor Berg replied didactically, tapping the table with his pencil, "even at a court martial, the defendant has a right to know on what grounds the accusation is based. I am the defendant. You cannot deprive me of my rights."

"The incriminating material shall not be submitted."

"Why?"

"Because we are not a court and not a department of gendarmes."

Doctor Berg wanted to reply again, but changed his mind. He frowned as if in pain, laid down the pencil and rose slowly from his chair. His clean-shaven face darkened. He went over to Rosenstern, leaned towards him, his eyes flashing, and looked straight into his eyes:

"Listen, Arkady Borisovich. I can understand how Gruzdiev or Zalkind or the other comrades who don't know me should express such opinions—should give voice to such a terrible suspicion. But you know me. It's not the first year that we have been working together on the committee. You have been a witness to my whole life. You cannot, you dare not, doubt me.

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Aren't you—aren't you ashamed? I don't say it in reproach. I understand. I should probably have acted the same way in your place. But—but—to suspect me! Me—me!" He turned away, awkwardly brushing a tear off his eyelashes.

He spoke so simply, with such apparent truthfulness, his words expressed such a depth of outraged feeling, and his weeping seemed so sincere that Rosenstern felt embarrassed.

"What if I'm mistaken? What if Tutushkin was lying? What if Arseny Ivanovich is right?" He cast a disturbed look at Aleksandr, blue-eyed, broad-shouldered, with a stern set face, sitting on the table in a position of military erectness. It was evident that he had no faith in Doctor Berg and felt contempt for the whole doubtful procedure. He caught Rosenstern's look, smiled, and said harshly:

"All this has no bearing on the case."

"No bearing on the case?" Doctor Berg turned to him in quick indignation. "Here is what I'll tell you, Mister Lieutenant Aleksandr Nikolayevich Bolotov." Berg's voice had suddenly grown firm. "I don't know when you joined the Party and what you have done for it. Perhaps you have done a good deal. I don't doubt it. But I do know that I—any one is witness to it—have been working for the Party for eight years. If you want, I'll tell you the story of my life, and you tell us yours. Do you want me to tell my story? We'll see who has done more for the revolution, who has worked more, who is more deserving of trust. I have established twenty-three printing presses. I have opened all the frontiers from Koenigsberg to Jasey. I have organized dozens of workmen's circles. I have been a

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member of the committee for the last five years. I have been working unceasingly, from morning to night. And if the Party has grown, if it has reached lofty heights, I have the right to assert that I am one of those who have been building it up. And now you come, you, who have taken part in the campaign of Tsu Shima, you, ignorant in revolutionary matters, and tell me it has no bearing on the case; you hasten to accuse me." He banged his fist on the table and began to pace the room excitedly.

"Yes, you hasten to accuse me," he continued a moment later, flushed with anger. "But where are the proofs? Where? Who gave you the right to sit in judgment if you cannot prove it? Who? The Party? The committee? But I am a rightful member of the committee, too. If you could prove it, you would submit the incriminating material to me. Why are you silent? You have the floor, not I. Not you are the judges, but I—I accuse. I say, you are not comrades, you are not judges, you are hypocrites, you slander me, you fling mud at me. Shame on you! I want you to explain!"

Rosenstern was listening, with his head leaning to one side and his eyes fixed on Doctor Berg with a harsh look of revenge and anger. His embarrassment had passed. He felt ashamed that he had been influenced by a superficial feeling, like a weak child. "And the gallows. And the Party? And terror? No, Tutushkin is not lying, he dares not lie," he thought, and said firmly:

"This has no bearing on the case either."

"You think so? You, too, Rosenstern? What is left for me to do? Where, oh God, is truth?" Doctor Berg said in a failing voice, but immediately regained control over himself.

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"Very well. Then submit the incriminating material, please."

"We have told you, we will submit no such material."

"In that case I refuse to testify."

Rosenstern raised his eye-brows contemptuously.

"You refuse?"

"Yes."

"Think it over. We will not come a second time."

"I have thought it over already."

"And you refuse?"

"Yes."

"You are committing a crime."

"Yes."

"You are ruining yourself."

"Yes."

"Do you know what is awaiting you?"

Doctor Berg shook his head indifferently, acting as if it were the same to him whether he were convicted or exonerated, whether his life be taken or spared. His manner seemed to indicate that the terrible disgrace he had just gone through was not eradicable, was unheard of, was so great that in the face of that eternal moment everything else looked pale—life, revolution, death. Gennady Gennadievich, feeling he would burst into tears, jumped up, ran over to Doctor Berg, and grasped his hands.

"Is this right of you? What are you doing, my silver one? For God's sake. You are disobeying the committee! What shall we report at the meeting? Listen to me, for God's sake, listen to me!"

Aleksandr and Rosenstern rose, and went toward the door. Berg realized the committee was leaving and made an irresolute step towards them. Looking around fev-

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erishly, as if searching for help, he stood still a moment, speechless. Then suddenly, with a jerk of his chin, as if somebody had struck him a painful blow, he shouted in a shrill falsetto:

"Rosenstern! You may not believe me, you may kill me—yes, kill me—but—but—I give you my word of honour, I have never worked for the police."

He suppressed a sob and turned to the window. Aleksandr to his surprise saw his shoulders tremble, his bald head shiver, and his back sway. He was sobbing noiselessly, without tears, holding on to the window frame and paying no attention to the others in the room. His long narrow body in its fashionable dark-brown coat was trembling and jerking, his teeth were chattering, his shaven chin was shivering. It was not as if the famous Doctor Berg, the self-reliant member of the committee were crying, but a helpless little boy. He was so pitiful, so unhappy and weak, his misfortune was so oppressive, the merciless verdict was so terrible, Gennady Gennadievich was so pale, that Rosenstern, losing control of himself, ran hurriedly out of the room. On the stairs Aleksandr was waiting for him impatiently.

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CHAPTER VI

TUTUSHKIN succeeded in stealing a document, a report in Doctor Berg's handwriting, which made it clear that the Party was in the power of the secret service and a spy was working in the committee. Aliosha Gruzdiev, deeply agitated, on the point of suicide, left St. Petersburg, without taking leave of anybody. Gennady Gennadievich had to admit that his saving hypothesis was without foundation. Vera Andreyevna wept in indignation and shouted that she was disgraced. Arseny Ivanovich groaned and advised them to appeal to the convention. And though the comrades could see that the treachery had undermined the Party, just as a scythe cuts into the grass, and though every one felt conscious in his heart of the disgrace, not one of them thought of his own unconscious guilt. Doctor Berg's treachery seemed to be a misfortune beyond their control, and they were not to blame if a hired murderer found his way into the committee. And since the Party had many members, and they all had had faith in Doctor Berg, had loved him and worked with him, none of them were guilty in the matter. Neither Arseny Ivanovich, Zalkind, Vera Andreyevna, nor Aliosha Gruzdiev perceived that treachery was not an accidental evil for which they were all in full measure responsible. The faith in the committee was shaken. Disquieting rumours sprang up that Doctor Berg was not the only traitor. The work stopped. The comrades were suspicious of one another.

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The Party, exhausted by arrests, deprived of its best workers, disappointed in its own strength, could no longer count on victory. Like a defeated army, with a timid commander at its head, the Party was retreating without giving battle. Men and women who had been fighting valiantly the day before were now giving up their arms. Some complained of the committee, others of "violence and lack of control," some of treachery and some of the "indifference of the masses." But each one thought he was performing his duty conscientiously.

While Rosenstern was following up Doctor Berg, questioning and trying him, he secretly cherished the hope that his innocence would be proved. He had worked with him so long, had become so accustomed to respect him, and had grown so attached to him, that he could not conceive of his meeting a violent death. And though he had promised Aleksandr that the provocateur would be killed, he felt that he lacked the courage to keep his promise. He tried to convince himself that Doctor Berg was not a comrade, but a secret service spy, that they had never worked hand in hand, that the Party would approve of the legalized killing. And still he could not kill. This strange duality oppressed him. He realized that he still loved Berg, and the feeling bred by many years of work together could not be influenced by evident treachery, could not be reconciled to fratricide. So, contemptuous of his own faintheartedness, he gave Aleksandr permission in the name of the committee to "act at his own discretion." Aleksandr met Abram and Vanya the same day. Abram was stirred.

"Ha, a real American grafter," he exclaimed indig-

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nantly, and his round, laughing, childish face was distorted by anger. "Five years in the committee! Intel-li-gentzia! Well, all right. We're no students. We're workingmen. Ha! Rest assured—"

Aleksandr looked at him in curiosity.

"But it's a capital crime."

"A capital crime? What if it is? Very important! And what did you expect of us—prayers?"

"But the Party has pronounced the verdict."

"Well, is it my fault?" Abram said angrily.

Vanya shrugged his shoulders.

"The wolf was getting us; now we'll get the wolf," he said coldly and with hatred in his voice.

Aleksandr smiled.

"Tomorrow?"

"Yes, tomorrow."

"At his house?"

"Yes, at his house."

"Well, all right. Good luck to you."

On the sixth of May at ten o'clock in the morning Abram was nearing Doctor Berg's house. The contemplated murder seemed neither difficult nor dangerous to him. He gave no thought to it that he might be arrested and that it was hardly possible to escape on the Maly Prospect. "The many-eyed snake! The scoundrel! He arrested Ippolit. Men of that calibre arrange pogroms, violate women, kill children, burn houses, drive out Jews. Well, all right. Ha!" he kept on muttering through his teeth. He found the house, which Aleksandr had described to him, and mounted the stairs slowly. On the lower landing a padded door stood wide open. From it issued steam, hot and stuffy. Washer-women were laundering. One of them, good-looking, well-built,

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her face red from the heat, turned around when she heard his steps.

"They're working. Ha! They are not the intelligentzia," Abram thought. On the fifth floor he saw a card on the door, "Doctor of Medicine Fiodor Fiodorovich Berg," and stopped, breathing heavily. "A capital crime. What does it mean? Ridiculous!" He raised the trigger of his revolver and was going to ring the bell, but suddenly hesitated. "I'll take a smoke." He took out his box of matches and slowly lighted a match. He smoked passionately, in short puffs, listening to what was going on in the yard. All was quiet around him, except that in the laundry a deep contralto voice was singing a sad song, and from the street came the sound of sweeping. He did not notice how the cigarette gave out and the paper burned his fingers. "And suppose he is not at home?" He reached for the bell with his trembling hand. "He'll know how to make pogroms! He'll know how to hang people! Let a fire burn him."

He waited long, and felt a dry, bitter taste in his mouth, as he clutched his revolver. The contralto voice in the laundry ceased singing and somebody laughed aloud. From the second floor came the sound of loud quarrelling. Abram trembled and rang again.

The lock clicked. On the threshold behind the half-open door appeared Doctor Berg, tall in his brown coat. He looked at Abram through his glasses from under sullen brows.

"What do you wish?"

"Don't you recognize me?"

"No. What do you want? Who are you?"

Abram did not answer. Fearing the door might shut,

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he leaned his whole weight against it. Doctor Berg turned pale, and retreating, let him enter the anteroom.

They were standing in the anteroom, not daring to move, not daring to think, nor to breathe, ready to jump at each other at the first movement. Abram felt Berg's uneaven breathing and saw his wide-open, sparkling eyes. Neither of them could have told how long it lasted. At length Doctor Berg repeated his question in a hoarse whisper:

"What do you want?"

At the same instant Abram raised his revolver. But he had no time to shoot. As soon as he saw the smooth barrel, Berg jumped on Abram, catching his wrist and squeezing it tightly. Pressing him with his shoulders, breathing heavily, and gradually moving away from the door, he tried to force Abram's fingers open and make him drop the revolver. Abram felt that he could not release himself. He freed his left hand, and reached imperceptibly under his vest, and took out a large Finnish knife. He swung his hand, hitting himself painfully against the jamb of the door, and struck hard with the knife. Something heaved, something soft and elastic gave way, and warm blood ran over his fingers. Doctor Berg immediately released his hold on the revolver. His body bent up, and he made a step backward. He groaned, caught at his heart, and trying to keep his balance, leaned against the wall. But his body swayed, his head dropped, and he fell heavily to the floor. His left side was bleeding.

Abram bent over him. He lay on his side, his bony legs under him. His face could not be seen. It seemed to Abram that he was still alive. He was seized by terror. Forgetting himself, his eyes horror-stricken, he

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crouched back on his heels and began to strike the body rapidly with his knife. He swung the blood-covered steel and brought it down on the neck, and sides, the back, again and again, without pausing, taking revenge for the terror he had just gone through. He did not remember how many wounds he inflicted. He thought he heard a sound at the door. Mad with terror, at a loss what to do, fearing somebody might ring the bell, he threw away the revolver and looked around. If Vanya had by chance entered then, he would not have recognized Abram. It was not the good-natured, smiling, familiar Abram. It was another man, an entire stranger. Big drops of perspiration ran down his expressionless face, as white as a table cover. His hair stuck together, his legs trembled, and his back was strangely bent. He stopped to listen. There was not a soul around. Trying not to look at the mutilated corpse, he passed into the bedroom. He was troubled by the annoying thought: "I ought to wash up—wash up—" In a corner near the bed stood a wash-stand, but Abram did not see it. He walked about the room as if he were blind, searching in all the corners, leaving bloodstains everywhere and without finding a drop of water. He did not have the courage to go through all the rooms, and return to the anteroom.

And suddenly he was seized by a desire to get away, by the blind instinct of an animal to save itself. He found his cap with difficulty and pulled it over his forehead. He forgot about his knife and revolver. He came out stealthily on the staircase and listened leaning over the railing.

"There is nothing in the world I have need of," the contralto voice was singing. Abram shook his head and

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began to descend the stairs. He came out into the yard. At the garbage pit the hostler was sweeping up some horse manure. He was working with his back to Abram and did not notice him. Abram hid his face in his collar and walked away rapidly. Beyond the gate was the street. He called a hack and ordered him to drive to the Nevsky Prospect, and it was not until he reached the Nikolayevich Bridge and beheld the Neva sparkling in the sun, that he realized there was no danger. He pulled the leather apron over him, so as to cover the blood-stains, and heaved a sigh of relief, of happiness, almost of innocence. "So you are killed just the same! Ha! You'll know how to make pogroms. You'll know how to kill Jews!"

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CHAPTER VII

AT Volodya's death his squad went to pieces like an iron chain under the blows of a hammer. Its members scattered all over Russia. "Systematic partisan terror" had ended in defeat. Some of the men turned to robbery, others left the work entirely, and only an imperceptible minority still kept their determination to finish Volodya's work. At the head of these stood Herman Freze. He saw clearly that the struggle was hopeless and the government was victorious. But that did not deter him. He thought it was his duty, the duty of an irreconcilable terrorist, to remain at his glorious post to the end. And though he felt he was alone and powerless, without the committee to support him, he continued to build his tower of Babel with bold, inexhaustible patience. During the few months he had grown old and bald and had lost his confident bearing—the self-reliant manner of a well-to-do student. He travelled over the whole Volga region and the south in the hope of finding fighting anarchists. He found nobody, and to his deep regret had to accept the deserter Svistkov, who had been expelled by Volodya for drunkenness. Gerasim Svistkov, of the regiment of grenadiers, a six-foot giant, with white hair and white moustaches, resembling Wilhelm II, was filled with remorse for his great sin. He swore he would give up drink, and was true to his oath. This Svistkov, and the tramp, jester and singer from Sormov, Nikolay, nicknamed, "Kolka the bum," became Freze's trusted as-

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sistants. But the work was not progressing. The attempts at assassination were not successful. Yet the fewer the hopes, the firmer, the more diligent, and the more energetic did the band become. Freze knew he would be hanged. But he was not afraid of death. All he thought of was how to fulfil Volodya's dream of creating a powerful, invincible system of terror. At the end of May he came from Moscow to St. Petersburg to seek the means of dynamiting the secret service. Kolka the Bum and Svistkov came with him.

After he had stopped in the Hotel Reef and had turned over for registration purposes his false passport made out by Kolka in the name of a Polish nobleman, Dovgello, Freze went to the Zabalkansky Prospect. He turned instinctively to Fontanka Street. He had not been in St. Petersburg since Volodya had arranged the expropriation. And now he was being pulled by a hidden force to Great Podyacheskaya, to that sacred spot where Konstantin had thrown the first bomb and the band had "earned" its first money. The day was cloudy and close. A light summer rain was falling. Freze walked along the wet sidewalk past the once familiar houses. One of them, the house of merchant Beliakov, a square, cold-looking, yellow barracks of a building, with iron balconies on the second floor and a greengrocer's shop below, had particularly stuck in his memory. In front of this house, about five yards from the entrance, had lain the canvas bags that had been thrown upon the pavement, and there the decisive battle had taken place. Freze recalled how a tall bearded Cossack outside on a little horse had raised his rifle and aimed at his breast. He recalled how at

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the same moment he had levelled his revolver, how his hand had jerked and his shoulder had recoiled. The rifle clattered to the pavement. The frightened horse, showing his teeth, snorting, and tossing his head, stood up on his hind legs. And Freze also recalled how Prokhor's trotter, a fine grey horse with white spots, was snorting, and how Prokhor, with his peasant face and worried eyes, turned in the saddle and shouted something to Volodya.

"Prokhor is gone—and Volodya—and Olga—and Konstantin—and Mitya—and Yelizar. A cemetery, forsaken graves—and nobody sheds tears over them," he thought anxiously. Crossing the street he entered a saloon familiar to him in its minutest details. In that dark saloon he and the Fly had awaited Volodya a quarter of an hour before he was killed. The same old bartender who had met them a year ago greeted them now, and the same active boy wiped the table with a dirty towel. Freze seated himself and concealed his face behind a newspaper. At any minute, it seemed to him, the door would open and pock-marked, long-haired Konstantin in an officer's mantle with a bomb hidden beneath would enter and would say, just as he had on that brilliant April morning:

"Good morning. Are you here? And where is our Vladimir Ivanovich?"

It seemed to him that the sound of hoofs would begin to rumble, and from under the hood of the carriage a rakish hat would appear. "Olga," he thought, "Olga. Why did she shoot herself? And if she hadn't shot herself? She would have been hanged. Do they ever show mercy? My God, there isn't a soul. All have died—

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all." He crumpled the newspaper up and rose. The hot sun sparkled between the clouds and played on the street lamps.

"Right here, at this lamp, lay Konstantin dying." Freze dropped his head on his chest and walked slowly back to Fontanka Street.

At the Yusupov Park somebody called his name:

"Herman Karlovich! Is that you?"

Before him stood Epstein. He stooped, his face was of a greenish pallor, and blue goggles covered his eyes. He wore a black hat, a short light coat, and bright yellow gloves. He would never have been taken for a revolutionist, an expropriator and anarchist, but some merchant's careless, idle son. And though he had disgracefully deserted the band and had gone to Paris, Freze was heartily glad to see him. He held out his hand to Epstein and smiled affably. Freze smiled only with his eyes. His narrow, stony German face always remained immobile.

"Are you back from Paris long?"

"Don't you know?" Epstein exclaimed in surprise, as if expecting Freze to know the exact time of his arrival. "Direct from the station. Well, how are affairs?"

"What affairs?"

"Yours, of course."

"Mine? My affairs are not in very good shape."

"Why not?"

"There are only a few men left of the old squad."

"Why only a few?"

Freze sighed:

"I don't know."

"You don't know. Who does know, then? God per-

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haps?" Epstein looked at Freze sternly. "It means that the comrades cannot work."

"Perhaps."

"Not perhaps, but surely. If Volodya were alive—"

"Well, Volodya was different," Freze replied reluctantly.

"What was Volodya?" Epstein replied angrily. "Why are we worse than Volodya? Have you read my article on the worst and the best? No? I wrote that a general clean-up is necessary—you understand? a general clean-up. We must have a spontaneous, universal, all-embracing, ruthless terror. There are two races of mankind, the race of exploiters and the race of exploited. The exploiters are by heritage wicked, greedy, and predatory. It is unthinkable to associate with them. They must be annihilated. You understand, annihilated. All of them to the last man. If there are a hundred thousand of them, we must annihilate a hundred thousand. If there are a million of them, we must annihilate a million. If a hundred million, a hundred million must be annihilated. We must not stop before anything. And I—I, Ruvim Epstein, know how it should be done. I came just to find you. I will tell you how we must work. We shall win the world. We shall have the revolution. No?"

Night was falling. A transparent violet fog wove itself about the Neva, and in the east, beyond the Baltic factory, the sky became overcast with dark clouds. A fresh wind sprang up. It was getting cold. Peals of thunder sounded. Epstein buttoned up his coat and continued rapturously:

"It is a great misfortune that people cannot free themselves of prejudice. Somehow all are afraid of free-

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dom. Somehow nobody dares to take any risks. You think it is not so? Oh, I've always said, what a childish fairytale it is that one must think of laws! Where are they, those laws? I laugh at all laws. I am a law unto myself. Have you read Nietzsche? You must read him. Remember, we want to fill one another with admiration. Yes, with admiration. Olga understood. She alone understood that for a freeman all is permissible. A man—the name is full of pride. You understand—pride! Well, and we? It's ridiculous! I come from Paris. I thought I'd find you and you would tell me something very pleasant. Instead you say affairs are in a bad way. Why? Because you dare not risk putting them into good shape.

Epstein was silent a moment, then he raised his thin weak hand in a yellow glove, and began to recite loudly and with inspiration:

"Beyond the limits of the finite,
High in the endless radiant spaces,
Rebellious spirits unafraid,
We fly in search of happiness,
In search of joy that is complete.
Light as the air we soar and soar,
And scarcely move our wings, ne'er halting,
The world and all therein embracing.
We'll grasp with glee all it contains.
With bold and hard endeavor we'll make
For lofty heights yet unattained.
Far from the narrow haunts of earth
We'll fly to realms of undreamed wonders,
To worlds of rare and hidden beauty."

Freze wrinkled his high white forehead. Epstein's words about beauty, Nietzsche, about the worst and the best, about an abyss and daring seemed void of all sense,

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the babbling of a school-boy. He recalled Volodya's harsh estimate: "The woodcock is small, but it makes a big noise." His feeling of pleasure suddenly died out. Glancing at Epstein with an up-and-down look of contempt, he asked wearily:

"Why are you saying all this?"

"What do you mean, why?" Epstein replied excitedly. "It means a renascent beautiful life, an untiring struggle for light, and consequently, for revolution. How can you fail to understand? Don't we revolutionists pine for beauty? For universal harmony? For the annihilation of two-legged scorpions? For the destruction of the bourgeoisie? Or don't we? Perhaps beauty is not in daring? 'In our enmity we must be creators of images and phantasms and with their aid we must declare war on one another.' So spoke Nietzsche. And you? What will you say to it? I must warn you. I am convinced that for the success of the revolution one must dare anything, without exception. That is the only way to achieve good results. Perhaps you think, I just talk this way?" He began to whisper mysteriously, leaning one shoulder towards Freze. "I must tell you one thing, a secret, one plan that I have thought out, tried out and accepted. You will be convinced that a clever man may do anything and that I know how to carry on terror. You will be convinced when we are successful. No?"

Freze was lost in thought. Epstein, his body bent, his face pale, his dark glasses over his eyes, seemed to him so foolish, insignificant and ridiculous that he did not care to listen to his "secret." But suppressing his uneasy feeling, he said lazily:

"If you have something to tell me useful to terror, I

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am ready to listen. But the street is not a convenient place to talk in."

"Yes, yes, of course," Epstein rejoined excitedly. "Let's go to the Islands! Driver, to the Islands!" Without giving Freze a chance to say a word, he got into the hack and ordered the driver to go to the night restaurant Alcazar.

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CHAPTER VIII

EPSTEIN entered the noisy, brightly lighted Alcazar with firm, heavy steps. He immediately ordered a private room, and when the waiters brought in the supper he drank a glass of wine, lit a cigarette and began to talk:

"Won't you drink? The wine isn't bad. Tell me, have you considered why terror was unsuccessful, or rather, may be unsuccessful? No? Were there few workers? Too little courage? Lack of money? Lack of discretion? Strange! There was enough of everything. I tell you, the only thing was there was too little daring. Ah, what sentimental tales! 'I rejoice in great sin,' spake Zarathustra, 'as my great consolation. Such things, however, are not said for long ears. . . . These are fine, far-away things: at them sheep's claws shall not grasp! Think ye that I am here to put right what ye have put wrong? . . . Or show you restless, miswandering, misclimbing ones, new and easier foot paths?' Do you remember? Well, that's just why I have come. You understand? I can show you the way. You understand, I can point it out to you. Have you heard about Doctor Berg?"

Freze looked at Epstein and yawned. The room filled with smoke and the smell of cigars. The annoying sounds from the orchestra, the miserable looking Epstein in dark glasses and his bombast tired him out. He passed his hands over his face, and thinking about his

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own affairs, the squad and the contemplated assassinations, answered indifferently:

"Yes, I've heard about Doctor Berg."

"Well?"

"Nothing."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. A provocateur was killed."

"Strange! That's not the point. I ask you, is terror possible if a provocateur is a member of the committee? Well? Of course, it's impossible. You won't contradict that? I ask you, is terror possible if we sheepsheads are not going to fight?"

"Fight what?"

"What? Treachery, of course!"

"But how can we fight it?"

"That's just what I've come for. I have a faultless plan. I'll show you the way. You must understand that till the police know everything, terror cannot be successful. The only way to fight them is to enter the secret service. Isn't that clear to you? Must I explain it to you? Chew it for you? Make it clear to you? In the party of the 'People's Freedom' there was a precedent that gave excellent results. While Klietochnikov served in the secret service, Zheliabov was out of danger. And then, you know, you must imagine what it means to serve in the secret service. Imagine what a man must feel who has dared to do it! What emotions, what sensations he must go through! To work for terror and at the same time to work for the secret service! To know everything that is going on on both sides of the barricade! To know that he holds the fate of Russia in his hands! The fate of Russia! What beauty! What grandeur! To walk at the edge of the

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precipice and to strive for 'radiant infinity'! Here's the abyss of the underworld! Here's the abyss of the heights! No? Just think! Just think of it. Well, what do you say?"

Epstein jumped up, his face flushed, his head raised proudly.

Freze was no longer indifferent. He listened to him with curiosity. "Is he babbling, or not? He's babbling, of course."

He frowned and said reluctantly:

"If you ask me my opinion, I must tell you that we must not join the secret service in any circumstances."

"Why? Why? Explain why!"

"Because it is treachery."

"Treachery? Ridiculous! Sentimental fairy tales! Ancient commandments! A moral imperative! Law! But how in God's name can you call it treachery if I say, not for myself, but for terror, for the revolution? Well, and the law. What is the law? Do you remember? 'Oh, send me madness, ye dwellers in heaven! Send me delirium and convulsions, sudden light and sudden darkness, give me fever, make me howl and creep, like an animal. I have killed the law. If I am not higher than the law, then I am the lowliest of men.' Thus wrote Friedrich Nietzsche. Well and I, Ruvim Epstein, tell you this: a free man is higher, immeasurably higher, than the highest law. A free man must not howl and creep. I jeer at the foolish law!"

He went over to the table and drank another glass of wine. His lengthy quotations from Nietzsche, his uncertain words, his exaggerated ease and forced smile were signs to Freze that Epstein was concealing something he was afraid to tell. "And suppose he is not

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babbling? Suppose?" he thought with apprehension, and said:

"That's all very well. But you surely have not come from Paris to lecture on morals."

Epstein did not answer immediately. He seated himself in a low arm-chair and looked at Freze long and silently. In the low chair he looked still shorter, still weaker and more helpless. In the main saloon the orchestra was playing noisily. In the hall waiters were whispering to each other. Epstein coughed irresolutely:

"I must tell you something."

"I am listening."

"Well—I—I—you know my views? I have come to the conclusion that for the benefit of terror it is necessary to join the secret service."

"And?"

"And—and—I'll tell it to you, Freze. You are wise, you won't misunderstand me. I tell you, terror can't be successful unless the secret service stops hampering us. Am I not right? Well, if that is so, somebody must be daring enough to join the secret service. A strong man will have the courage. A weak man will not. I am a free man, I recognize no authority. Don't you agree with me? Maybe you think it's not the right thing to do? Oh, I knew that beforehand. I knew nobody would understand me. Loneliness! Oh, my fatherland is loneliness." He clutched his head with both hands. "Now I come to you in tears. I ask you, do you want terror to be successful? Do you want to come out victorious? Do you want to work with me? Think it over, Freze."

Epstein rose in expectation of an answer. His sunken

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cheeks and lips trembled. Though Freze could see he was not joking and had really sold himself to the secret service, he could not believe the degrading confession. Without raising his eyes and still incredulous, in fear of hearing the irreparable word, he asked:

"You—you are working in the secret service?"

"Yes."

"How long?"

"Two months."

Freze turned pale and was silent. At last his truthful soul took in the whole fact, that this man Epstein was not a friend, not a comrade, not a well-wisher of lost Olga, but a secret service hireling, a spy. "Who betrayed Volodya?" The thought entered his mind like a sharp blade. Clenching his teeth, he asked harshly:

"How much do you get?"

"What do you mean?"

"How much do you get?"

"Herman Karlovich, what's this? A cross examination? I won't answer you. You have no right to question me like that."

"You won't answer me?"

"I won't. I spoke to you like a comrade, and you—" Epstein stole an angry glance at Freze, and flushed up. "This is the devil knows what! This is insolence!"

"You shall answer me."

"Well, all right. Five hundred rubles."

"A month?"

"Yes, a month."

"Where is the money?"

"What do you mean? I can't understand you. What is it? What do you want?"

"Where is the money?"

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Freze slowly and quietly put his right hand into his pocket. Epstein noticed the movement. He trembled and quickly produced his pocketbook and threw it on the table.

"Here are three hundred rubles. There, count the money if you want to."

"Three hundred? And the rest?"

"I don't understand. What do you want me to do? Save my money? Hide it in the ground? Or what? Well?"

"Then you live on your pay?"

"Yes, I live on it."

"See here, Epstein," Freze said glumly. An intoxicating joy was mounting in him. The idea occurred to him to take revenge on account of Volodya. It would be a revenge fitting and worthy of him. Epstein no longer seemed foolish, powerless, or pitiful. Now he assumed the shape of a sly, wicked enemy whom it would be a crime to spare.

"See here, Epstein, I am compelled—"

"Stop your joking, Herman Karlovich, won't you?" Epstein began excitedly. "What do you mean? You talk as if I were a provocateur! It's ridiculous—absurd. I have come here to work for terror. I have joined the secret service for that one purpose. Do you think I enjoy working there? You have not yet convinced me that I have made a mistake. Convince me. I am a free man. I am not afraid of anything. You can't prevent me from serving the revolution. This is violence. I protest. What difference does it make that I have been receiving money? What is money anyway? Why shouldn't I take it? Must I idealize things? Create suspicion? Where is the proof? Well?"

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Freze heard his fiery speech with indifference. When Epstein, choking with emotion and wiping his eyes with his handkerchief, dropped in exhaustion into a low arm-chair, Freze repeated coldly:

"Taking into consideration that you are a provocateur, I shall be compelled—"

"Compelled to what?"

"I shall be compelled to put one condition."

"What condition? What has a condition to do with it? Well! I want to be of benefit to him, I tell him what things to do and how to do them in order to make terror effective, and he threatens me. It's madness, foolishness, insanity! What do you think? I will call for help."

Freze wrinkled his bare white forehead and slowly drew his revolver from his pocket. He laid it near him on the table-cloth and smiled.

"If you want to call for help, why don't you? My condition is that you must kill Colonel von Schoen. Otherwise—otherwise—I shall be constrained to—kill you."

Epstein rose with difficulty from his chair. He stretched his thin neck and glanced idly round the room. The doors were closed; and between him and Freze was the table covered with bottles. The room was very light, very warm, and smelled strongly of wine. On the white table-cloth lay the loaded black revolver. Epstein heaved a deep sigh, and almost losing consciousness, fell back into his chair. As if in sleep he heard the even voice:

"Do you agree, or not?"

He made no reply. He forgot where he was, what was going on, who was questioning him, why the re-

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volver was sparkling, and why the electric lights were shining. All he understood was that Freze would not let him go, that his life was coming to an end, that in ten minutes he would die a disgraceful death. He was certain Freze would shoot him, shoot him there in that *chambre séparé* smelling of cigars and wine, that it would be futile to ask for mercy, futile to cry, to shout, to call for help, to argue, or even to struggle. Without thinking what he was doing, without knowing what to do, he nodded weakly, and crossed his hands on his chest in an attitude of self-defence, which was an old habit of his childhood. Freze looked at him in hatred and put his revolver back into his pocket.

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CHAPTER IX

THE next day Epstein woke up late, at eleven o'clock. The familiar hotel-room, the dusty rug, with its intricate pattern, the yellow closet with the mirror and the muslin window-curtains looked unattractive and strange, as if his whole life had changed during the night. Though the room was warm, he pulled the quilt up over his head, and made an attempt to fall asleep again so as to avoid his painful thoughts.

"Ah—ah—ah!" he groaned, biting his nails. "Freze! Ah—ah! What folly! What terrible folly! What brainless folly! Who was pulling at my tongue? What did I have to blab for? Couldn't I hold it back? He did not have to know anything. And I could have gone on working, and everything would have been all right. And now all is lost. Lost? Really lost? Can't I really fix it up? Ah—ah—ah! The devil!"

He was thoroughly convinced he had joined the secret service solely for the good of terror and there was incontestably a bottomless gulf between Doctor Berg and him. He was convinced he was not a venal "secret agent," but a bold revolutionist who could not be bought, more courageous, of course, than those who would not dare. And he was also convinced that his unpardonable sin lay solely in the fact that he had "babbled like a woman," and overestimated his trust in comradeship.

"He does not understand. The fanatic, the fool, the

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telegraph post! They have created laws! The saints! Oh, folly, folly, folly! Insane folly! But what's to be done?" He sat up uncombed and unwashed, swinging his bare legs and gesticulating with his arms as he muttered:

"He was telling me something. He said he'd kill me. He wouldn't dare to. For what? What have I done? Am I a provocateur? My conscience is clean. Why shouldn't it be clean since I am convinced that we must work in the secret service? Let him prove that I am wrong. Let him prove it. Yes, yes, let him prove it. Whom have I betrayed? Have I injured anybody? And the money? A trifle. Nonsense! A child would understand it. Ridiculous!"

He quieted down, almost convinced he was right and there was nothing to accuse him of. He put on his shoes and began to dress carefully. But the thought of what had taken place the evening before haunted him. Having combed himself and put the brush on the marble table his thoughts involuntarily reverted to Freze. At the same instant he recalled Colonel von Schoen, who wore his hair short and was ruddy and plump and a very polite gentleman. He recalled his round, dull eyes, those eyes of which he was so afraid, and their last conversation.

"Don't you know where Herman Freze is now, Epstein?"

"Have I betrayed?" Epstein was stricken with terror. His knees shook. "Why did I betray him? Am I a provocateur? How could I help giving an answer? If I had not answered, he would have grown suspicious of me—would have understood I was playing a game. It is inevitable. And what harm have

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I done? I merely said I thought Freze was in St. Petersburg. Well, what of it? St. Petersburg is big. He would surely be found." He tried to vindicate himself, tried hard to convince himself he had committed no crime, and Freze would not be arrested. "Even should some harm come of it, there is a difference. A provocateur works for money, while I do it for an ideal and for no personal interest. That must not be forgotten. It must be borne in mind that—that sometimes victims must be sacrificed." He staggered to the window and pulled the muslin curtain aside. "Freze says he'll kill me. Freze will kill me? How? Suppose I go out now and he should be waiting for me around the corner? Will he spare me? Do they spare? Why did I talk? How silly of me! He'll kill me? Why didn't he kill me yesterday? Could he? Didn't he dare to? I gave him a promise. How idiotic! Oh, what should I do? What should I do?" As he put on his coat awkwardly, he had a clear vision of the events of the night before. He saw the close, smoke-filled, brightly-lighted private dining-room, the narrow face, that seemed chiselled in stone, the black revolver and the table with bottles on it. "I shall be compelled to put one condition," Freze had said. "That means—I must escape. But where to? Escape where? They are surely watching me. There is no escape," he thought in fear and immediately caught at a new hope. "Suppose I don't go out? Suppose I hide here? Who can force me to come out? I shall sit right here, on this couch. And I will write to the colonel."

He quieted down for a moment and even tried to smoke, but his fingers were not firm, and he could not light the match.

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"How about Doctor Berg? They went to his house. Will they come here? Well, yes, it's very simple—they'll come here."

He did not doubt any longer that wherever he would be, whatever he would do, however he would try to protect himself, the merciless Freze would ferret him out. He threw away the unlighted cigarette and looked out into the hall cautiously. In the next room an elderly maid with a tired face was fixing up the bed. "A maid?" Epstein became excited. "I did not notice her yesterday. Is she a maid? My God!" Feeling a sudden spell of dizziness come over him, he ran down stairs quickly and came out on the Nevsky.

Sadovaya Street was crowded. There was a funeral procession for an officer. While the monster cortège of carriages and soldiers was passing, Epstein looked suspiciously at every passer-by. It seemed to him that somewhere near him, perhaps at his very side, was Freze, or Kolka or Svistkov, or some other terrorist whom he did not know. At the entrance to the public library stood a long-haired student in a white coat.

"That's strange," Epstein thought, looking at him attentively. "Why is he here? And why doesn't he look up? Why does he turn his eyes away? Who knows who he is?" Without thinking, afraid to look back, haunted by the fear that the student was following him, he ran along Sadovaya Street, jostling men and women, breathing heavily and not seeing where he was running. There was a steady ringing in his ears. He saw sparks of fire, and his feet caught in his coat all the time. The immense city of iron and stone, the tall impenetrable houses, the theatres, monuments, parks and castles seemed like a solitary prison cell, like a cleverly

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laid trap. Freze, he felt, was not the only one spying on him. So were the hack drivers, the newsboys, the messengers, the blind and crippled beggars. They were all treacherous members of the fighting squad, terrorists, intent upon killing him. They were laughing at him. Not a soul in the world had pity on him. He reached the Kalinkin Bridge and turned into Galerny Street. He could see the black chimneys of factories on Chekusky Street. At the custom house stood rows of barns, warehouses, stores, and low houses. Epstein halted. The blue diamond-like water was sparkling with silver spots and a boat was emerging from the Morsky Canal. Bells were ringing gleefully.

"It's Sunday. Bells are ringing." Epstein suddenly came to himself. "I must hide—I must hide—but what am I afraid of? How foolish! Even if Freze is following me, all I need do is tell Colonel von Schoen. Tell Colonel von Schoen? Then I'm a provocateur." He did not dare to develop the thought. His body bent. He staggered over the Egyptian Bridge, and reached the Peterhof Prospect. But as soon as he saw the people, the careless, hurrying crowds, he was seized by fear again. "There is no escape—no escape," he almost sobbed, and jumped upon a passing street-car.

The car was dirty and crowded, the windows were trickling, and the conductor was issuing tickets. Epstein squeezed himself into a corner, and looked around the car from beneath knitted brows. On the bench opposite him a retired soldier with medals on his chest was slumbering. "When did he come in? Before or after me?" Epstein tried to recall. He felt he was getting tired. "I think after me, yes, of course, after me. But how is it I didn't notice him? Why is he silent? He is

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pretending to sleep. I think I have seen him somewhere." The soldier drew his grey brows together and looked at Epstein with expressionless eyes. Epstein pressed closer to the wall. "He's looking at me. He's sly. He's afraid of making a mistake. My God! I must get off. It's best to jump off while the car is moving." The wheels squeaked, and the lame horses reduced their speed.

"Technological Institute," the conductor called out. Epstein got up and made his way with difficulty to the platform. The old soldier followed him.

"Well, of course, of course," Epstein thought, in utter terror. "It's so. What should I do? I must run." He looked back at the old man and ran stealthily into the Zagorodny Prospect. "I have seen him somewhere? Yes, I have," he kept repeating, accelerating his steps. He made his way through side-streets to the Obvodny Canal, past the gas works and the city slaughter houses, and reached the park. "If they're following me, they'll surely come here, and I'll see them —I'll see them." He did not know whom he would see and why it would be good if the terrorists found him there in the deserted section on the outskirts of St. Petersburg, where nobody would come to his rescue.

The day was sunny, warm as in summer. Beyond the tracks of the Warsaw Railroad the white crosses of a cemetery could be seen.

"My God, what is the trouble with me?" Epstein grasped his head. "My God, am I losing my mind? Shall I tell the colonel? No?" But the thought immediately died out. "No—I must leave—leave—leave St. Petersburg—cross the frontier—to Paris." And Paris, dismal Paris, where he had gone hungry and cold

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and had spent weary days, now seemed a land of promise. "But how can I leave? Oh, it makes no difference. Nobody will find me there. Nobody will dare to kill me there." He looked at his watch. It was four o'clock. "I think there is a train. And suppose they're at the station? No, no, it cannot be." He took a hack, ordered the top to be raised, and asked to be taken to the Warsaw Station. He arrived just as the third bell was given. A suburban train was leaving for Luga. Epstein, full of excitement, happy there was no one there, went to the first-class car, and after the locomotive had whistled and the train had started, he walked through all the cars for the sake of security. The car next to the locomotive was almost empty. Epstein sank into the dirty seat and covered his face with his hands.

"Thank God, it's all over! Thank God, I'm saved! Saved! Saved!" he repeated, hardly believing in his own good fortune. His coat burst open, his hat was crushed and his glasses fell and were broken. The wheels clattered monotonously, the car vibrated at rail-joints, and through the open windows the damp air rushed in. Everything was now forgotten, he felt, everything was past and gone, was forgiven, and Freze, reconciled, was not exacting promises.

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CHAPTER X

FREZE'S men were impatiently waiting for "work." Long months had passed in idleness and loneliness, in explicable unforeseen failures. The governor of Saratov, on whom they had had their eyes all winter, left for St. Petersburg before Christmas and did not return to Saratov. In February, on the eve of an expropriation in Kazan, Kolka suddenly noticed that the squad was being spied upon. In March the assassination of the Odessa district attorney, who was known for his cruelty, did not take place because the dynamite had not arrived in time. In April a transport of ammunition fell through in Tver, and it was necessary to postpone a contemplated attack on the postoffice.

Freze did not lose his composure. He had come to the capital to destroy the secret service and he was immeasurably happy that there was an opportunity to kill Colonel von Schoen. He did not doubt that Epstein was too frightened either to "squeal" or to run away, and he was sure the squad would acquit itself with honour. He thought himself obliged to revenge Volodya's death, the defeated terror, and the defeated revolution. And though he hated Epstein, as people hate a wicked, treacherous enemy, he decided to send him across the frontier in case the colonel were really killed.

The day following his meeting with Epstein he saw Svistkov and Kolka. He told them of the planned assassination. They met in the Viborg section, in the cheap restaurant Rostov-on-Don.

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When Freze had finished, Svistkov curled his long moustaches that were like Kaiser Wilhelm's, and made no answer. His soldier-like brown face with its rough chin gave no indication of what he thought of Epstein's treachery. Freze was not surprised. He knew Svistkov could keep things to himself and achieve the most dangerous things. Kolka, a red-haired, thick-lipped fellow of about twenty-eight, laughed aloud. He had a provoking sort of laugh, as if he were making fun of himself and his companions.

"There's a trick for you! The sly guy! Ha—ha—ha! How many people do you think know about the joke already? I would have strangled the dirty-face with my own hands. I would have killed him on the spot! You may crack and crack, but you can't bend!"

Freze motioned to a waiter and ordered tea. Kolka became restless in his chair, his greenish, catlike eyes protruded more than usually, and he laughed louder still.

"I remember there was a man by the name of Filatka in our shop. He was a scoundrel, not a man. We were watching him. Something was wrong, we saw—something foxy about him. What would you have done? We got hold of him and began questioning him. 'You knave, you scoundrel, confess. We'll try you.' He began to cry and shout and jump up and down. 'Brothers, I swear to God, not I. Brothers, here's the cross, I'm not guilty.' 'All right, talk. Who was running to the secret service yesterday? Speak up, you bastard! I'll beat you to death!' He kept crying like a fish, 'Comrades, forgive me! Spare my soul!' But he couldn't fool us. The grave for him!"

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"You killed him?" Svistkov put in gloomily.

"What do you think we did—forgave him?"

"That's what they deserve."

Freze hardly heard their conversation. The thought of Colonel von Schoen was disturbing him. "If Colonel von Schoen is killed," he was considering, "it will at once become easier to work. He knows everything. He is at the head of the secret service. Epstein will show us his house and tell us when he is at home. I will make the bomb. A bomb is more reliable. What would Volodya do? After all, Epstein is a provocateur. Will he fool us? No, he won't. And suppose he runs away? If he runs away, then what shall I do? Too bad I did not establish a watch over him. But no, he is a coward. He will not dare to run away."

He raised his head and looked at Svistkov. Svistkov was sitting with his broad back bent, and arms spread in a circle, noisily drinking his tea. "And Volodya is gone—and Yelizar—and Olga." Freze sighed and touched Svistkov's sleeve.

"Listen, Svistkov."

"Yes."

"You go to Epstein's house tomorrow at eight o'clock."

"Yes, sir."

"To the hotel."

"Yes, sir."

"Take a revolver along and keep an eye on Epstein. You understand?"

Svistkov, drinking his tea, said yes with his eyes. Kolka became attentive.

"Herman Karlovich, this isn't fair."

"What?"

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"How about me?"

"You?" Freze mused. "There is no work for you yet."

"That means one worker and seven idlers?" Kolka muttered offended. "Why should he put his head into the noose every day?"

Freze patted him on the shoulder in a conciliatory manner, paid the bill and went out.

"I must prepare the weapon for tomorrow," he thought, as he entered his room. He locked the door carefully, opened the satchel, and took out a round box with soldered edges. "Volodya's bequest," he smiled contentedly, and uncovered the soft, odorous, yellowish mass. He was so accustomed to make bombs and handle dynamite, and was so proud of his difficult work that the thought of an explosion never disturbed him. He worked with the complacency of a jeweller, carefully and without passion, measuring all his motions. "Yes, I'll order Epstein to show us Colonel Schoen's house," he repeated, kneading the elastic mass. "Svistkov will throw the bomb. Tomorrow." Steps resounded in the hall. Freze got up and listened at the door. "Nonsense, no one will come in," he thought indifferently, without apprehension, and returned to the table. He filled the tin box, laid it on the bed carefully and examined the kindling tube. The glass tube was in good condition, but the mercury was damp and needed drying. Still oblivious of the danger of an explosion, he lighted the alcohol heater and emptied the mercury into a pan. The grains began to give forth a dry cracking sound. "Suppose they explode?" Freze became worried. "No, they won't. They never have." He sat down and began to look at the trembling flame with close

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attention. The hotel was quiet. No sounds came from outside.

"Olga used to hide our dynamite," Freze whispered. "Olga—how long ago it was!"

Then suddenly, sitting there in front of the loaded bomb, a few hours before the planned assassination, he was seized by fear. He realized at last that the revolution was defeated, that his attempts were futile, and that terror was ineffective. Neither the killing of Colonel von Schoen, nor the dynamiting of the secret service, nor the execution of Epstein, nor a dozen desperate expropriations could turn the tide of events, or effect any change. "Then why am I alive? Why am I working? Why am I killing?" he asked himself anxiously and touched his bald forehead. He was not oppressed by his loneliness, nor by that feeling of having been deserted which came to him after Volodya's death, nor by the sensation that a dead waste surrounded him, nor even by the thought of blood. He was oppressed by a suddenly born consciousness that terror was fruitless, that he was torn away from life, that his efforts were vain.

"The revolution has been defeated." The words that carried disgrace with them flashed through his mind. He muttered them aloud and looked blankly into the flame. "All right, let it be defeated. I must remain on the battlefield. We shall not surrender. I have no right to retreat. I am defending the last barricade. I am defending the red banner. I may perish, but so has Volodya perished." Forgetting about Epstein and Von Schoen and the mercury, he began to lose his usual self-control. He took the decanter from the table and poured out a glass of water.

"Is it really impossible to win? Have we really been

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defeated? *La commune est battue, nous n'avons pas vaincu.* Ah, it's all the same. We shall not surrender. I, at any rate, will not surrender." He stood erect and looked into the fire again. His firm, sharp-featured face turned pale and still narrower, and his prominent near-sighted eyes became sterner and more sorrowful. He bent over the table. And he remembered no more. Something ringing, fiery-red, hot, and like lightning, covered his eyes, blue spots rushed in the air, and the violet ceiling trembled. There was no time to become frightened. There was no time to scream. There was no time to run. He dropped his arms helplessly and lay flat on the rug.

On regaining his senses, he could not understand for a time what had happened and where he was. An unfamiliar, boundless feeling possessed him, a feeling of repose, of blissful restfulness, as if the tiresome journey were over and he had found a haven at last. Everything he had just been thinking about—the revolution, Epstein, Colonel von Schoen and the squad—seemed distant, unimportant, something he was over and done with. "How good," he whispered, conscious of an odour of burning and not comprehending where the fire was and why it was not being extinguished. "How good! I have done my duty. We will not surrender. I will not surrender. An explosion? Yes, an explosion. Volodya, Volodya, Volodya!" He tried to raise himself, but felt a sharp pain in his leg and a rattling in his chest. He stretched his arms, pressed his hot cheeks to the rug and half opened one eye. But he saw nothing. And the same feeling of repose was in his soul. *"Ich sterbe,"* he muttered weakly and heaved a deep sigh. *"Ya, ich sterbe.* All is well, all is beautiful." That

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big, radiant feeling which filled his soul was so deep and significant that he did not doubt it was death. His hand jerked, his neck stretched out, and his straight body trembled. He sighed again, and ceased to live.

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CHAPTER XI

A MONTH after the killing of Doctor Berg, Zalkind, Arseny Ivanovich, Vera Andreyevna and Aliosha Gruzdiev were arrested simultaneously in different parts of Russia. Gennady Gennadievich, who had long been ill and coughed blood, went South at the advice of his physicians. The Party remained without a committee. Rosenstern was taken up with "organization work," and entrusted Aleksandr with the work of terror.

The arrest of the comrades did not disturb Aleksandr. He had seen the decrepitude of Arseny Ivanovich, the magnanimity of Aliosha Gruzdiev, the carelessness of Vera Andreyevna, but like Volodya he could not understand that the red tape slowness was not the result of their conscious will, but of the spirit of the Party, of that spirit which had allowed treachery to flourish and murderous robbery to spread. He thought that Rosenstern, trained by bitter experience, could rebuild the beloved Party and regain the lost faith. But the responsibility which he, the unknown lieutenant Aleksandr Bolotov, had assumed, was disturbing him. He had not expected that a man unprepared for the work, never having even seen hard labour camps or even the prison walls, would be honoured with the task of directing the Party troops. But there was no choice. Though the comrades were not reconciled to their defeat and continued to argue at meetings and to write articles on the desirability and even the absolute necessity of terror,

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nobody dared to risk his life after the exposé of Doctor Berg. Abram, Vanya, Anna, Kolka the Bum, and Svistkov allied themselves with Aleksandr, and also that vigorous old man from Siberia, Solomon Moiseyevich Bukh. With these experienced people Aleksandr set out to do the work.

Towards the end of July the group assembled in Moscow. One day in August Aleksandr made an appointment with Abram. He left the house in the evening, but instead of taking Tverskaya Street and going along the Vozdvizhenka Street, he went through the Kremlin. It was only in the pleasant city of Moscow, in the Moscow of tar, peasant jackets, mats, saints' ikons, and broken barricades, that he felt with his whole heart that he was Russian, bound to Russia by the ties of blood. In the east, beyond the Presnensky Ponds, the sun was setting in a bright-red sky and swallows were flying through the air against the sunset. Aleksandr stopped at the Tainitzka Tower. He saw the blue ribbon of the narrow river, the brilliantly lighted Zamoskvoriechy Street, Neskuchny Park and Simonov Monastery—immense, Russian, ancient Moscow.

"The burden of all Russia—terror," he thought. "But why I? Why not Rosenstern, why not one of those who has earned the honour, who has proved his right. God, why is Andriusha dead? He could have helped me, he could teach me. Whence shall I get the courage? The ability? I must kill. Kill whom? Raise my hand against whom? And if defeat should result once more? Another unforgettable disgrace?"

It was getting dark. The Kremlin was deserted, but outside its gates surged the Moscow crowds. Here, at the white Kremlin walls, in front of the Uspensky

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Church, a few paces away from the tomb of the Russian Czars, Aleksandr felt a slight hesitation. But he understood that to him and to the Party and to the people this blood was needed. Only blood could crown the revolution, could save Russia. It seemed right to him, and right that he, an officer of the Russian navy, a participant in the Japanese campaign, should strike the last blow, should take revenge for Port Arthur and Tsu Shima, that he should bring the revolution to a finish at the cost of his own life.

"Zheliabov and Pestel," he thought with joy, "the Decembrists and the people's freedom, and great Russia, emancipated by me." On the Kremlin quay below lights were appearing like stars, and beyond the Neskuchny the sky was darkening. Filled with excitement he came out on the Krasnaya Plaza, and descended past the Lobnoye Place into the Aleksandrov Park. The birches were rustling. Aleksandr trembled. A small, lean man with curled moustaches looked straight at him. "Tutushkin," he thought, and went faster. But Tutushkin nodded to him. Aleksandr frowned, but followed him, suppressing an unpleasant feeling.

"What do you want?"

"How are you, Aleksandr Nikolayevich? May I disturb you? I think there is no one around."

Aleksandr shrugged his shoulders in disdain. The dark side street, the faint shimmering of the street lamps, Tutushkin's whisper and his spy's cap reminded him of Berg, of Masha of the secret service and the undeserved disgrace he had so recently gone through. "One of those fishermen who fish out of their own pockets," he thought with repugnance, and repeated coldly:

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"What do you want?"

"I'm afraid on the street, Aleksandr Nikolayevich. I don't see any of our lads, still it's dangerous. Wouldn't you come into a saloon? I have some business to tell you about."

Five minutes later they were sitting in a beer-saloon. Tutushkin, bending low over the table, was speaking hurriedly.

"I have been looking for you, Aleksandr Nikolayevich—for a long time. I didn't get a chance. Of course, we know your address."

"My address?"

"Yes, your address—Hotel Metropol? But of course, I was afraid. Though we have relaxed our watch over you in order not to excite any suspicion, still—the hotel clerk, the waiters, and so on."

Aleksandr listened, and could not believe his ears. Tutushkin seemed to be trying to deceive him and was laughing at him. After a pause he said quietly:

"You're lying. How do you know?"

"Lying? I have told you once before that we know everything. Let me explain to you. You may doubt what I say if you wish, but I am telling you the truth, upon my word. My own life hangs by a hair. Only out of goodwill—I knew your deceased brother Andrey Nikolayevich, may he rest in peace. Think of Doctor Berg. Who threw the light? I, Dmitry Tutushkin. And now I have been assigned to a band that is to watch over you."

"Go on."

"Yes—well—I'm afraid of everything. I'm a family man—burdened with a family. Judge for yourself: six small children. The colonel might squeeze me with

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his nails, and not a thing would be left, only a wet spot. And so I have been looking for you in the hope that you wouldn't forget me. I know your magnanimity. The thing is this, Aleksandr Nikolayevich. We have instituted a watch over you. And not only over you. We know there are six others beside you working. And believe me, we also know whom you're threatening—not a mere governor. We know of the lady who lives on Arbata Street, of the Jew with light hair, the 'nose,' we call him, who lives on Ilinka Street, of the younger Jew, the 'clamp,' the one who wears a fur jacket and lives in a hotel on Sadovaya Street. Am I not right? Don't you believe me? Well, then, I have warned you, Aleksandr Nikolayevich. Now do as you please. And don't slight me."

"But who betrayed us?" Aleksandr asked. He felt no hatred or anger any more, as though what Tutushkin had said was natural and proper, and nothing else could be expected. Later, long afterwards, when he recalled this horrid conversation, he could never explain where he had gathered the strength and repose that had upheld him. Tutushkin spread his hands in a gesture of regret.

"Who betrayed you? I really don't know, I don't know. But so help me God, some one has sold you for a trifle. Don't have any doubts on that point. Believe me, it's always that way, and I must tell you, it's surely one of your own people."

"Which one?"

"One of those six."

"No, there you're lying."

"As you please."

"How does he dare to talk that way? How does he

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dare to?" Aleksandr flushed deeply, took out his pocket-book, and silently handed Tutushkin a hundred rubles. He made to rise, but Tutushkin, hiding the money in his fist, said cautiously:

"*Merci.* Thank you very much. But I must tell you, even though you feel offended again. Of course, I can't swear to it, but do you know them all perfectly well?"

"Speak straight out. Who is the provocateur?"

"I don't know. So help me God, I don't," Tutushkin replied hastily. "If I knew, believe me I would not shield him."

"Perhaps you're not satisfied?"

"Oh, yes, I am."

"Tell me, do you want money?"

"My God! What is money? Metal! I'd gladly do it, but by God I don't know. My advice to you, Aleksandr Nikolayevich, is to cross the border. You won't be arrested tomorrow. But—if you'll pardon me—one who takes care of himself is taken care of by God."

"Why won't I be arrested tomorrow?"

"Because it's our intention to have you arrested with a bomb in your hands at the scene of the crime—caught with the goods, so to say—at the moment of the attempt."

"At the moment of the attempt?"

"Exactly. Then they will get a reward."

Aleksandr looked at him intently.

"Then you don't know who the provocateur is?"

"No, I don't."

On his way to the Hotel Metropol late that night Aleksandr felt as though some one had played a bitter joke on him. "The tomb of the Russian Czars, the Uspensky Cathedral, the Kremlin, Holy Moscow," he

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thought with a bitter smile. "I am a Russian. Yes, of course I am a Russian. We are all Russians, thank God —Tutushkin, Nebogatov, Doctor Berg, and Stoessel, and Colonel von Schoen, and this treacherous unknown 'comrade.' We are all Russians, the grandchildren of Pestel, the children of Zheliabov. What a shameful thing! What can we do? What can we achieve? Unfortunate, slavish, snow-bound Russia!"

At Iverskaya Street a hairy peasant snatched his cap off and kept bowing low and pointing his finger to his chest. Aleksandr looked at him contemptuously. "The great Russian nation, the great Russian revolution! The only hope of the Russian is in God, in the faithful, orthodox priest."

He recalled the service that had been held on the battleship, on the eve of battle, and how the ship's chaplain, the stout priest, Father Yevpl, whom the soldiers had nicknamed "Chaldean," had read the prayers to the sound of cannons.

"The Japanese, I am sure, did not pray, did not bow to the ikons. They were learning how to shoot." And he recalled his prayers: "God, give me the happiness to help save Russia, even though my share be only as a drop in the ocean, as a spark in the flame. God, help me to see victory."

"And I helped, and I saw. And I shall help, and I shall see," he muttered, biting his lips until they bled. The Theatre Plaza was dark. The building of the theatre appeared a black mass. The air was close. No stars were out.

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CHAPTER XII

WHEN the first sharp pain had passed, Aleksandr resolved that he must fight. But how —that was the question. Solomon Moiseyevich, Vanya, Abram, Anna, Svistkov, and Kolka the Bum were all honest terrorists. It was impossible to believe that any of them should be a traitor, a Judas. Vanya had been fighting in Moscow. Anna had been making bombs. Abram had killed Doctor Berg. Solomon Moiseyevich had spent ten years at hard labour. Svistkov and Kolka had worked with Volodya. To no one of them could suspicion attach.

Aleksandr sent a telegram to Rosenstern, asking him to come to Moscow. Rosenstern, who had grown thin and pale, utterly exhausted by the Party work, listened to what Aleksandr had to say, and then asked:

"What do you intend to do? Tell me."

They were sitting in Philippov's café in a secluded corner near the door. At the counter sounded the laughter of children. There was a tinkling of glasses and the atmosphere smelled of bread and tobacco. Aleksandr looked at the walls hung with price-lists, at the soiled tables, at the floor covered with spit and cigar butts, and paused before he replied. It suddenly seemed strange to him, that he, Aleksandr Bolotov, an ensign of the Russian navy, a brilliant young officer, should be in hiding like a murderer, followed by spies, in constant danger of arrest, and in the company of

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the famous revolutionary Rosenstern. Never in his life, on the ocean, or in battle, or later in Kioto, had he experienced such a feeling of pitiful helplessness. He shook his head impatiently, trying to drive away these bitter thoughts, and taking out his silver cigarette case, he lit a cigarette.

"I will be quite frank with you. Had I foreseen Doctor Berg was a provocateur, I would never have joined the Party. Why have I been chosen to direct the work of terror? You will say there is no one else. You will say after this affair with Doctor Berg nobody cares to work as he used to. All right. I am satisfied. I have assumed the responsibility. I am not afraid of it. But teach me what to do. You have been working in the committee for many years. You must teach me. Both of us know there is a provocateur. But where is he? Who is he? How can we find out?"

Rosenstern turned away. His round shoulders drooped slowly and his curly head shook. Rosenstern, the correct, the perfectly poised, who had not wavered when the committee fell, now looked as forlorn as an unhappy boy. It all seemed unreal. That was not Aleksandr speaking about the band, but some irresponsible person saying meaningless things. The Party could not be dying, the well-established machine to which he had consecrated himself could not be crumbling into dust. He felt like saying that Tutushkin had deliberately lied, that there could be no treachery, that he could vouch for the band. But he kept quiet and covered his face with his hands.

"You know, when I was attached to the fleet," Aleksandr began quietly, "I knew the Japanese were stronger. I knew Nebogatov's ships were 'self-sinkers,'

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and there had been a battle on July 28, and the *Petropavlovsk* had been lost. I knew we were ignorant and did not know how to man vessels. I knew it all, and yet, strange as it may seem to you, I had faith in our victory. Not only that, but I believed firmly—I wanted to believe—that victory could be secured by courage, yes, yes, by courage alone, by the careful Russian perhaps. I also had faith in our strength, in Russia's strength, in Russia that gave us Istomin, Kornilov, Ushakhov. And do you know when I lost my faith? Not when I realized that nothing can be gained by courage alone; not when I saw that all was lost; not even during the battle, when the *Osliabya* went down, when the *Suvorov* was set on fire. No, long before that. I went into battle without the least bit of hope, just because I had sworn allegiance to Russia. I'll tell you how it happened. On the 23d of November we were approaching the shores of Africa, near Bengala, the Portuguese colonies. We came up in full force, the whole invincible armada, the *Suvorov,* the *Aleksandr,* the *Borodino,* the *Osliabya,* the *Orel,* the *Nahimov,* the *Aurora,* and the *Donskoy.* We entered the bay, the Great Fish Bay, a sandy shoal. We began to take on coal. And what do you think? Suddenly smoke appeared near shore. It came nearer and nearer. A queer sort of dishlike thing was coming, hardly a ship, the devil knows what! A salt-box, a boat of ancient construction, with one cannon and two mitrailleuses. And such a foolish name—*Limpopo.* The Portuguese flag was flying over it. There was a mulatto in it with a sword and plumes. It came to our side, to the *Suvorov's* side, and the mulatto made a horn out of his hands, and shouted with all his might: 'Leave here at

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once, or I will shoot!' That was the *Limpopo's* order to the *Suvorov*. And then for the first time I began to have doubts of our victory. Not only doubts. I felt with all my heart that it was the end. International law? It was all over. But if we had been a power, would he have dared? And now this Tutushkin. He is our *Limpopo*. He advises me to go to Paris. 'Leave here at once, or I will shoot.' Well, man, teach me how. I know. Solomon Moiseyevich, Anna, Vanya, Abram, Svistkov, and Kolka the Bum, and—you—don't be offended—and you—one of you is a provocateur. That is the warning the *Limpopo* gave me. You remember the 'Night in May'? You remember a youngster in the pond and fairies in the water? He knows one of them is not a fairy, but a witch. But which one? Who? They are all alike. They are all white and pure. So are we. We are all white and pure. That case of Doctor Berg weighed on me heavily. It was not merely a misfortune. Think of the disgrace! It's a disgrace for a provocateur to be in the Party—in the Party, in the committee. And now in the band. What's to be done?"

Aleksandr was not accustomed to much talking. He was surprised at his own eloquence.

"I took part in war," he thought bitterly, "was in battle, lived through captivity. I joined the Party, planned murder, all so that I might be sitting here in this vile-smelling café, asking who the provocateur is, waiting for an answer, and expecting arrest?"

For a time there was silence. Rosenstern was pale with red spots showing on his cheeks. He looked at Aleksandr sideways.

"If there is a provocateur, we must find out who he is."

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"Yes, of course—but how?"

"How? I don't know."

"But you exposed Doctor Berg."

Rosenstern gave a sickly smile.

"Doctor Berg? Ah, my God, what a comparison! I had observed him closely for three months. And you are to be arrested in a week."

"What's to be done, then?"

"I don't know."

A red-faced, clean-shaven man in a long check coat entered the café. He seated himself at a table in the corner opposite and ordered tea. Rosenstern looked up fearfully.

"Let's go."

They rose and went out. On the other side, at the furnished-room house the Madrid, two men were loitering. Not far from them at the street corner, a hack was standing.

"Here, mister, a hack."

"Spies," Rosenstern whispered. "Here is what I think, Aleksandr Nikolayevich. You must make an investigation. Investigate all of them. You must keep a watch on everybody. You must make a thorough search. And—and then—disband them."

Aleksandr realized that Rosenstern could not help him. But he felt he would not desert terror. Neither Rosenstern, nor the band, nor the Party had the power to stop the attempt. He must carry it through. He felt he was responsible for the treachery that had arisen not before the Party alone, but before all Russia, and even if it was impossible to win, it was possible to deny defeat. The dignity of the revolution, the honour of the band, and the memory of the dead, the blood that had

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been spilled for the people, all demanded the sacrifice. But the thought of death did not frighten him. "God! Give me the happiness to have a share in saving Russia, like a drop in the ocean, like a spark in the flame," he prayed. Standing erect and looking straight into Rosenstern's eyes, he said firmly:

"I will not disband the squad."

Rosenstern thought a little.

"You will ruin yourself."

"Perhaps."

"But there's no use in it."

"Perhaps."

"But you have no hope of success."

"I don't know."

"You have no hopes, have you, of the treachery being exposed?"

"I don't know."

Rosenstern paused.

"Listen, take my advice. Leave here at once."

"Across the border?"

"Yes."

"*Limpopo,* Arkady Borisovich."

"Well, what if it is *Limpopo?*" Rosenstern answered without taking offence. "Tutushkin is right. Listen, what else can you do? You'll be hanged, and the band with you, of course. Who needs it? Who? It means a useless loss of yourself. What's the sense of it? Think of it, after you come back you will be useful again, you will work for terror again. Well, suppose there is a provocateur in the band. Can't you collect another band? I beg of you, I beg of you sincerely, I insist—in the name of the Party, in the name of terror. Do you hear me?"

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"I hear you."

"Well?"

"Nothing."

"My God," Rosenstern continued angrily, "this is obstinacy. You are a member of the Party, you must reckon with it. What will you achieve? Well, there will be an effective trial. But what's the good of it? Do we want trials? We want terror. What will happen if you are arrested? I can't work alone. Do you think I can? The Party is dying. My God, the Party! Think of it dying!" Rosenstern paused for a second in his excitement. He wanted to go on to prove to Aleksandr that it was his duty as a Party member to save the Party, and consequently his own life. But Aleksandr interrupted him drily:

"You've said enough, Arkady Borisovich. But there's no use. I won't leave. Make up your mind to it."

Rosenstern trembled.

"Then it means the fate of Rozhdestvensky?"

"Yes."

"The fate of Tsu Shima?"

Aleksandr did not answer. Rosenstern shook his hand quietly and without looking back turned toward Tverskaya Street.

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CHAPTER XIII

"HOW did I escape?" Svistkov asked gloomily, and touched his long moustachios with the turned-up ends. "It isn't worth talking about. I ran away and that's all."

"No, you'd better tell me about it."

"Well, there was a revolt in our regiment. So then—"

"A revolt?"

"Exactly. The fifth company revolted. The fellows shouted, 'Take the guns, comrades!' And we seized the guns."

"What was the cause of the revolt?"

"On account of the meat. The meat was rotten, with worms. The fifth company was in formation, a corporal to its right. He waved his gun. 'Come with me, brothers, come!' Well, we made some sort of a disturbance, then we saw the Bielostok Regiment coming and then they began to shoot with machine guns. Nothing came of it. That's all."

He forgot to add that he had killed one officer and when the machine guns were being fired he was the only one in the regiment who did not throw away his gun and hide in the barracks. Aleksandr lighted a cigarette.

"Go on."

"What followed? Nothing. We were arrested, taken to prison, confined to the top floor. One hundred and twenty-five men. Of course, a trial. The verdict would be death, nothing less. So we stayed there. The

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sentry were from our village. Well, we began to think how we could escape from the trap we were in. We knocked on the wall—a hollow sound. That meant a pipe in it for ventilation. So we began to whittle at the wall with a knife. We made a hole. Well. . . ." He wrinkled his brow as if trying to recall something, and looked up. The hot rays of the sun fell through the tops of the bricks and played on the dusty bench. The sound of distant wheels crunching over sand came to their ears. Kolka, who had been silent all the time, laughed and nudged Svistkov's elbow.

"He's as bashful as a crab. Have you really forgotten? My, what a girlish memory! Come on, tell us. Stop your fooling."

"What is there to tell? We made a hole, and then made a rope out of sheets. Well, one of us was a soldier, Fitik was his name. He crossed himself, climbed into the hole and began to let himself down the rope. At last we felt a pull on the rope. That meant to pull him up. So we pulled him up. 'A wall,' he said, 'and beyond the wall, a kitchen.' 'How do you know?' we asked. 'I pried a brick loose,' he said. Well—" Svistkov paused and spat out. "He was a desperate fellow, this Fitik. He could do anything. He was caught in Odessa. Well, a kitchen, he said. We began to argue who should go first? The first day eighteen men ran away. And I was among them. We went through the kitchen. I even met the sentry officer."

"Well?"

"I met him. He said: 'Where are you going?' 'For hot water,' I said. That's all."

"For hot water?" Kolka repeated. "That's great! You were lucky!"

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Aleksandr had heard of this escape, the incredible escape of thirty-seven grenadiers. But he could not imagine how Svistkov, so awkward, indifferent and sulky, had climbed down a rope in full view of the sentry at the gates. Svistkov's lazy way of talking, his low voice and his inexpressive dull eyes embarrassed him. "Did Tutushkin mean him?" he thought, almost with relief, and threw away his cigarette butt.

"Go on."

"Then I joined Vladimir Ivanovich."

"What were you doing?"

"Drinking," Kolka put in hilariously.

"What do you mean—drinking?" Svistkov frowned and flushed. It was strange to see his tanned soldier face grow red with anger and embarrassment. He waved his hand in indignation and said in a tone of offence, without looking at Aleksandr:

"He'd better keep quiet. But it's so. I must confess, Vladimir Ivanovich discharged me for drinking. But I really don't drink any more."

"Why not?"

"I swore off."

"And you don't drink?"

"No, sir, I don't drink."

"Not a drop?"

"Not a drop."

"I'll quit the cards,
I'll quit billiards,
The bitter vodka I'll debar.
I'll work by day,
Begin to pray,
I'll be conductor on a car."

Kolka began to sing derisively in a falsetto voice. He

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sat on the grass in Turkish fashion, his feet under him, and he blinked up at the sun. He looked bronze colour in the hot rays—a red cap, red hair, red hands, and a torn, badly-fitting red coat.

"What's the matter with you?" Svistkov turned on him.

"Nothing."

"What are you singing? What do you mean by those words? Perhaps you know something? Speak up, if you do."

"What do I know? You funny fellow! My grandfather knew, but he died long ago."

"Then what are you singing about?"

"Singing. When one drinks, he sings. My soul sings, but I have no voice."

Aleksandr frowned. "He ran away, was drinking, discharged for it, drinks no more. And what a murderous face! And Rosenstern advised me to accept him." He lighted another cigarette and looked at Svistkov with his cold blue eyes.

"Why did you join the band?"

Svistkov straightened his moustaches.

"I can't," he answered hoarsely. "I had lived enough—I can't—"

"He can't stand it," Kolka put in, winking one eye.

"Yes, I can't. Of course—there—"

"Why?"

"What's the use of questioning me, Aleksandr Nikolayevich?" Svistkov answered gloomily, and began to roll a cigarette. "My God, it's all plain. Nothing to eat, no land. What can a fellow do? Yuz has a million acres. And I? What have I? Where is justice

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in the world? I am for land and freedom," he finished resolutely and wiped his face.

Somewhere near them in the bushes a bird twittered cautiously. The sun was no longer overhead, but had sunk behind the birches. Across the bench a blue shadow was falling. "For land and freedom," Aleksandr said to himself in anger. "They are all for land and freedom." Now he was sure that Svistkov was deceiving him. The suspicion was so strong that he could hardly keep it to himself. But he restrained himself and said nothing. Kolka turned over, and smiling and leaning back on the grass, said simply:

"But when I escaped, it was a great escape. Not merely a hole to poke through. My God, it's a joke!"

"You have escaped, too?"

"I had the honour. Very simple. I was caught in Nizhni in proper shape. I was brought before the chief. He looked so stern, was frowning and fidgeting. 'Your name?' I was silent. 'Your name?' I was silent. 'Will you answer?' 'I won't.' 'Take him away.' I was taken away. Two soldiers were leading me along the street. It was evening. I looked around. An alley to the right—downhill. I thought a little. Eh, take a chance. Risk is the spice of life. I spit on them all. Anyway my head wasn't safe. The soldiers were something like him, not men, but monuments," he pointed to Svistkov. "I invoked the help of God, and rolled down the hill. I heard them shoot, but it was dark. They couldn't aim, couldn't catch me. I jumped over a fence and ran with all my might. Ran and ran till I was exhausted. So help me God, it's the truth."

"And why were you arrested?"

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"That was when Vladimir Ivanovich was living. For an expropriation."

"Were you arrested alone?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where did you escape to?"

"Back to the squad."

"Am I not ashamed of myself?" Aleksandr bethought himself. "They both worked with their lives, indeed. Both escaped by a miracle. How can I suspect them? But who is the provocateur? Surely not Anna? Not Vanya? Not Rosenstern?"

Kolka got up, and with his hands in his pockets looked slyly at Aleksandr as if wanting to show that he knew his oppressive doubts and was not surprised by them.

"What did you in the squad?"

"What did I do? Ha-ha! What didn't I do—that's what you should ask. I was everything, saw everything, tried everything. I may say I had my innings in this world. I was a worker in a factory, a shepherd in Savara, and a tramp. And after Comrade Freze's death I remained all alone, like a mushroom under a birch. I have no one. I couldn't very well go home. At home in the Ural there is a-plenty, cold springs, deep lakes, wild forests, meadows. It's a garden of Eden. But it's not my lot to be in Eden. Ha-ha-ha!" he laughed his rollicking laugh.

Aleksandr's frown deepened. Talk leads to nothing and he had learned nothing. Kolka was so happy and so healthy, his laughter was so contagious, his eyes sparkled so provokingly that Aleksandr felt ashamed again. "A man like that doesn't lie. He can't lie? He's too hearty," he decided in his soul.

"Do you drink, too?"

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"I?" Kolka answered unhesitatingly. "I'm no saint. To drink and to loaf and be rich." His face suddenly darkened. He paused, and then began to sing at the top of his voice:

"Farewell, my Odessa,
Farewell, quarantine,
I'm going in exile
To far Sakhaline.
Just two pairs of stockings,
Chains my legs to grip,
And four wooden shoes,
Then off for the trip!"

He sang in a wail, as the peasants sing, and while he sang Aleksandr kept his eyes on him. "How could I have suspicions of him?" he thought in despair. "But if it isn't Svistkov and if it isn't Kolka, who is it? Is there really a provocateur among us? Perhaps Tutushkin lied?"

The sun was setting, but it was still hot, and the birds kept up their singing. Sokolniki was deserted. Aleksandr walked slowly towards Moscow and meditated on how easy it is to slander a man.

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CHAPTER XIV

A WEEK passed. Rosenstern had gone south on Party business. Aleksandr, lost in suspicion, ready to believe that Tutushkin had lied, decided after some deliberation to consult the squad. He had a clear perception of the absurdity of the step, but hoped to be able to unearth the treachery in a serious talk. The meeting was to take place in Anna's home in the furnished-room house, Kerch, on Arbata Street. Anna, having the custody of the dynamite, occupied a spacious, nicely furnished flat, with a separate entrance on Povarskaya Street. As he was taking off his hat and coat in the narrow hall, which was crowded with trunks, Aleksandr heard the conceited words:

"The peasants? Ah, the poor famished peasants!" It was Kolka speaking laughingly. "The much-suffering Russian people? Nonsense. I have seen enough of these people! Plenty! Much obliged. The peasant is very well fed, if you want to know. A peasant will get drunk, have a fight with the landowner, will sleep it off and will be afraid of a pig. Where are you going, honest people? To get spanked, little father, to get spanked." He imitated the peasants in a wailing voice. "And they go. Creep along on their poor horses. Ha-ha-ha! So help me God, they go. Slaves! You can do with them whatever you please. Take Luzhenovsky—he ate them with his gruel. Well, did the peasants kill him? They'll stand anything. Christ suffered and bade us suffer. Damned fools!"

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"Don't talk that way. I don't like it." Aleksandr recognized the harsh, ringing, and somewhat masculine voice of Anna with a Nizhny Novgorod accent on the "O." "You ought to be ashamed. I lived in a village, too. I know as well as you do. Do you remember:

"These poor hamlets,
This poverty of nature,
The land of long suffering,
The land of the Russian people!
The proud look of stranger
Shall never see or know
What's hid and shines mysteriously
Within your humble nakedness."

"And aren't you a Russian? Aren't you a peasant? You mustn't curse, Nikolay, but love and forgive," she added in a softer voice.

Aleksandr smiled. "And forgive. When I'm not there, she argues, recites from Tiutchev, and when I come in, she drops her head and is silent. A fine way of being conspirative."

In the big, light room, at a table set for tea, sat Solomon Moiseyevich and Vanya. Solomon Moiseyevich was talking in whispers to Svistkov. At the window, with his back to the comrades, sat Abram. When Aleksandr entered, Anna dropped her eyes and flushed.

Aleksandr glanced at the familiar faces, which now seemed impenetrable to him. His eyes stopped at Vanya. Vanya, black-haired, with high cheekbones, was dressed in a badly fitting coat and was rolling a cigarette thoughtfully. He looked straight ahead, as if he saw nothing and was thinking of something important and oppressive.

"What's the matter with him?" flashed through

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Aleksandr's mind. He greeted all, seated himself, and began his prepared speech.

"Recently I began to notice that we were being spied upon. I am convinced I'm not mistaken. In fact, I know it's so. The question is, what is the cause? There can be only two causes, either our own carelessness, or treachery—a provocateur." He said the last word firmly, almost carelessly, as if not attaching much weight to it. "As to myself, I think there cannot be a provocateur among us. But I should like to know what the comrades have to say."

He hardly finished when Vanya brought his fist down on the table. The spoons jumped, and a glass broke.

"A nice business! We surely are being spied upon. I was going to speak to you about it myself. I noticed it long ago. Something is wrong. There is a legion of spies and detectives. Not a spot to spit on even. Moths!"

"Tutushkin said the watch was relaxed, that there were almost no spies, so as not to arouse our suspicion. So how could Vanya notice anything?" Aleksandr thought in apprehension, but recalled that Vanya had killed Cossacks. "Killed Cossacks, fought in Moscow, worked with Andriusha. No, of course not, not he. Then who is it?" he asked himself for the hundredth time.

"Of course there is a provocateur," Vanya was shouting, his black eyes sparkling. "What are you thinking of? Indian cocks are thinking. We live like monks, we don't say a word, don't see each other. Where do the spies come from? Passports? But the passports are first rate. They are copies, no fakes. Who knows where I live? Nobody, nobody but you, Aleksandr Niko-

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layevich. Then why are there spies at my gate? Where did they come from? Or am I blind? Can't I tell a spy? Am I losing my mind? Suffering from a mania? Absolutely, some one has betrayed us. I was going to tell you long ago. Scoundrels! Pigs! This is no work, it's filth! The Party is drowning in filth."

He jumped up and began to pace the room, pale with anger. Abram did not turn his head. Svistkov breathed heavily and stroked his moustachios. Kolka was the only one that became indignant. His big, thick-lipped face showed a feeling of deep offence.

"What is it all about?" he drawled, looking at Vanya gloomily. "There is all sorts of talk around here. Of course there is. Who says anything else? Treachery is treachery, the devil take it. There are plenty of knaves in this world. Very many of them. But I'll tell you this. You know each other well, you're quite apart, but I and he there—" he pointed his finger at Svistkov, "we're new men. We've never worked in the Party. Who knows us? Business first of all. We will go." He shook his thick red hair. "Yes, we'll go, and you will feel quieter and we easier. Don't be angry. To listen to this! I've never heard anything like it. God had spared me before. No, better let me go, Aleksandr Nikolayevich. Somebody can feel and insult. Good-bye."

He sighed and began to look for his hat. Svistkov breathed heavily and pulled his cap down on his head.

"Wait a minute, comrades," Solomon Moiseyevich began in a conciliatory tone. He was known to the whole Party, and the whole Party loved him. In his younger days he had taken part in an affair of the old party of "People's Freedom," and after serving a term at hard

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labour he had returned to his terrorist activity. He was a tall old man, somewhat bent, but still vigorous, and he had kind, shining eyes.

"We all know each other and of course we trust each other. Otherwise we wouldn't be here. Put your cap down, Nikolay, and you, Svistkov, put your cap down. Still, though I trust all comrades, I think Vanya is right, and not Aleksandr Nikolayevich. Vanya says some one has betrayed us. We must confess it is quite probable. Out in Kara, in the hard labour prisons, we used to dig tunnels for escape purposes every month, and the government invariably discovered them. I remember one tunnel we dug was already carried beyond the prison limits. And of course, the usual failure. Some said it was an accident—the keeper had discovered it. But to-day an accident, tomorrow an accident, and the next day, a betrayal. So it is in this case. Have the spies noticed us? Through their own diligence? Yes? No, of course, some one has betrayed us. But does that indicate—let us be quite frank, without any fear of offence—that one of us is a provocateur? No, it does not. It may be that one of us has told somebody something unintentionally, out of carelessness, of course. Well, and rumours spread. And of course they reached the police, the secret service, Colonel von Schoen. And it follows that if any one has betrayed the troop, it does not mean that you, Aleksandr Nikolayevich, or I, or any one of the comrades, is an informer. And we must not get excited. It is written in the Bible: 'If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.' So it's better to be wise. Isn't that so, Nikolay?"

Aleksandr was impressed. "Of course, it was the re-

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sult of blabbing," he thought. "Some one was merely too talkative. Perhaps Rosenstern himself. What guarantee is there that everything is all right in the new committee?" And as is usually the case when one wants to prove himself in the right, Aleksandr like a child accepted the argument as correct. He came to believe that Tutushkin had lied, and the members of the troop were all honest, and there was no need of degrading investigations. Instantly, he felt relieved, as if there had been no spying and no danger of arrest. He looked at Kolka affectionately. "He's offended. Could a provocateur feel offended? Could an informer want to leave?" But Vanya, his excitement undiminished, came over to the table and exclaimed with reproach in his voice:

"So, Solomon Moiseyevich, rumours have spread, have they? But where from? I say, we live like monks. Our troop is more like a monastery. To whom can we write letters? Home, to our girls, or where? Perhaps *you* have been tempted to write a letter? Or I? Or Anna Petrovna? Or you, Kolka? Or you, Svistkov? You, Abram? Confess. This is no joke. Letters, Solomon Moiseyevich? Letters? Where could letters come from? And we have nobody to talk to. We are not accustomed to tell tales. We are not new at this game. Should we take any measures? But what measures can we take? If we don't know who the informer is? If we knew. But now what? Disband the troop? Or should we sit and wait until we're trapped? I trust everybody. Where is the insult? But I insist there is a traitor. Absolutely there is treachery. It's a pig-stall!"

He turned on his heel and began to pace up and

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down in the room again. Solomon Moiseyevich was silent. The room was as quiet as a field before a thundershower. Abram drummed on the window pane with his fingers and turned slowly to Vanya.

"Ha! If there is treachery, we must find it out."

"Find it out?" Kolka asked, and threw his cap on the table. "Find it, and we'll show it to you. Say, Svistkov, let's both look for it."

Svistkov looked at him sullenly.

"Kidding again, you bagpipe!"

Aleksandr felt his head spinning.

The kind, affectionate old man, Anna with downcast eyes and sunken cheeks, sullen Svistkov and laughing Kolka, good natured Abram and indignant Vanya, Rosenstern, who could not come to their aid—all were puzzling him—impenetrable, wicked people, one of whom was a Judas. The feeling of disgust came upon him again. "A boy at the pond, and fairies, one of them a witch. Of course, a witch. But which one is the witch?" Unable to find an answer, he said with harsh emphasis:

"Well, what's to be done? Tell us."

"I have something to tell you."

"You, Abram?"

"I."

"What is it?"

"Don't ask me now. Later."

"Why?"

"I said later."

"Say it now."

"Ha! Now it's impossible."

"What does he want? What can he tell me?" Aleksandr thought, but without surprise or apprehension.

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He well knew that even the deceitful conversation had not exposed the informer. Degenerated terror had not been saved. Vanya continued to pace the room like a furious wolf, the white-bearded old man sat all bent, Anna kept her modest silence, Kolka still had an air of wounded pride, and Svistkov, as angry as before, was breathing heavily. It was impossible, almost sinful, to believe that there, in that secret house on Arbata Street, in the cosy room, was a provocateur, the man who would have them all hanged the next day. The room was still, and the rain was beating on the window unceasingly.

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CHAPTER XV

"HERE I am," said Abram, with a confiding smile, and offered Aleksandr his broad hairy hand. "Excuse me. I have brought Solomon Moiseyevich along. I want both of you to know what I have to say. Maybe it won't please you. Maybe you won't like it. Maybe you'll think what does he know to teach us things? Maybe you don't like to listen to me. Maybe you think you know without me. But do me the favour and listen to me."

Abram and Solomon Moiseyevich had for once neglected the rules of secrecy. They had not made an appointment with Aleksandr for some remote alley in Moscow, in Zamoskvoriechy, or Solkolniki, or beyond the Tverskaya Gate, but came direct to his rooms in the Hotel Metropol. After their meeting at Anna's the usual cautiousness had lost its meaning. Everybody knew the band was being watched, and today or tomorrow might see them on the scaffold. But no one paid any attention to this. The provocateur had not been discovered, and spies were considered a secondary and insignificant evil.

"Listen to me." Abram glanced with disapproval at the patterned rug covering the whole floor, and seated himself on the edge of an arm-chair. He felt uncomfortable on the velvet cushion, but there were no plain chairs in the room, and the bed stood behind a muslin curtain. He tucked his immense feet close to the chair and heaved a deep sigh.

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"When you came and said Doctor Berg was a provocateur, I immediately said to myself, 'All right, then he'll be killed.' And you see, is he alive? But I also said something else to myself. I said, Abram, what is the intelligentzia? American grafters! They're always dirty! They work, but why? Who knows? The devil himself could break his leg. Don't be offended, I don't mean you. Ippolit was one of the intelligentzia, too. And still, even the wise men would not be able to understand why they take part in the revolution. What do they want Socialism for? They are not like us. We are workingmen. We know what we want. We want to live like human beings. That's easy to see. Well, so I thought, what is there surprising about a Doctor Berg—probably a rich man—being a provocateur? Maybe he got frightened and sold out. Very important—sold himself. He is one of the intelligentzia, and the intelligentzia sell themselves out every day. Aren't the government officials, for instance, intellectuals? And don't they sell out? Because, what is government service? It means to work against the people and be paid for it. Ha! So of course, they sell themselves out. And I said to myself, Abram, men like Doctor Berg write in the newspapers that the Jews eat Christian blood, such men exploit the poor, such as he hanged Ippolit, such as he incite to pogroms. And I know what pogroms are. Maybe I do. Well, I did what was necessary. And what do you say? Wasn't Doctor Berg a snake?"

"Make your story shorter."

"Shorter? At once. But please listen to me."

"I am listening."

"Now you came yesterday again, 'Comrades, we are

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being followed; one of us is a provocateur.' True, you didn't say so, but Vanya did. But that makes no difference because you think so, too. And perhaps it's true. I have long noticed that we are being spied upon. I have also asked myself, Tell me, Abram, if you are no fool, what does it all mean? What does it mean that there are spies all around? Excuse me''—he turned to Solomon Moiseyevich—''that's all nonsense about letters or careless blabbing. Nobody wrote any letters and nobody could blab. That's sure. And so I thought—''

Abram's harsh voice, his accent, and jerky sentences, as well as his excited womanish face were disagreeable to Aleksandr. ''He drags as if he were carrying water. And one can't understand what he wants. What did he come for? And why not alone? So as to have a witness? So as to escape examination?'' He lighted a cigarette and watched the yellowish flame of the match until it went out. He threw it away and looked at Abram again. ''But he killed Doctor Berg. . . . The devil knows!'' Abram was lost in thought and fixed his gaze on the rug.

''Well, what were you going to say?''

''What was I going to say? Wait, I'll tell you everything. So I thought, suppose there really is a knave in the band? Who can he be? There are three intellectuals among us, Aleksandr Nikolayevich, Solomon Moiseyevich, and Anna. But I said to myself, No, Abram, Aleksandr Nikolayevich's brother was hanged. There isn't a man in this world who could forget it. Then it's not he. And I went on; well, and Solomon Moiseyevich? But I answered myself, he suffered ten years at hard labour. Can he forget his sufferings? Will he sell out to dirty Von Schoen? Nonsense! So

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Anna remains. Perhaps it's she. I can't vouch for her, but I asked myself, Abram, do you trust her? And I said, I trust her. Why do you trust her? I don't know. Is it because she has been making bombs? But so was Doctor Berg making bombs. Who knows? And still I trust her. But if not she, not you, and not you, the intellectuals—ha!" He passed his hand across his face. "Then one of us, one of the workingmen, must be the provocateur. We sell out, we do harm to ourselves, don't we? I asked myself. And I answered, What do you mean, who? Take yourself, for instance. You, Abram, are an honest workingman, aren't you? Yes, I know I'm an honest workingman. Then is Vanya honest or is he a knave? Yes, Vanya is an honest workingman, too. How do I know he is? Because he has been working for the proletarian cause all his life. He fought at barricades, he attacked a district attorney with a bomb in his hands, and when I said that to myself—"

"Do you mean to express a definite suspicion?" Aleksandr remarked coldly.

"Suspicion? Why suspicion? I haven't expressed any suspicion. I merely say what I think. Ha! I think it's either Kolka or Svistkov. We don't know them. Do you know them? No? Who are they? Answer if you can. Please tell me what they were doing when they were with the anarchists. With Volodya. With Freze. Perhaps they were not working, but dealing in fruits? Who can vouch for this? Nikolay? What does he say about peasants? Do you vouch for him? You? But I have not come to tell you just this. I have come to suggest that we should arrange to watch them. We must find out where they go,

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where they live, when they think nobody can see them. Is it foolish? I say one of them is a scoundrel. So it is clear we must watch them. What else can we do? Well?"

Abram was still sitting on the very edge of the chair. His worn-out linen jacket and high boots gave him the appearance of a well-to-do Moscow merchant, not of a Jew. He dropped his thick eyebrows and waited shyly for an answer, gazing at the floor.

"That means, you propose that we should organize a secret service department?" Aleksandr replied in surprise and thought, "Who could propose such strong measures?" And suddenly Abram, whom he had trusted the day before, the honest, good-natured tanner Abram, with callouses on his hands and a Jewish accent, became almost detestable to him. And he felt a hatred for the band, where such insulting words were spoken and there was no work, but a nameless spying, a hatred for the Party and the revolution and even for terror. "And my own investigations?" he recalled. "If it is permissible to question, why not to spy? And Abram may be right after all."

Solomon Moiseyevich, tall, round-shouldered, and grey, in a buttoned black frock coat, made a few steps across the room and stopped in front of Abram.

"You're wrong, Abram." He jerked his neck nervously, coughed and fixed his collar, which was evidently bothering him. "You imagine that either Kolka or Svistkov is the provocateur. But if they should think wisely, they would probably suspect you or me or Anna. Then ought we to watch everybody? But would that be terror? No, it would be the same as the secret service. I think it is all our own fault. It is naïve to as-

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sume that treachery is an accident. If our conscience would really prevent us from spying and attempting to penetrate into people's hearts, if the Party were purer, if there were no attempts at leadership, no faintheartedness, no irresponsibility and robberies, if everybody would serve the revolution honestly and with real devotion, then there would be no Doctor Bergs. He could not have been, he would have been exposed in ten minutes. But now it's too late. You know the Psalmist says: 'Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire.' We have sunk in mire. We have come into deep waters. But we cannot spy upon each other."

"Ha, and why not?" Abram flushed. "Spy on me, if you want to. Please do. An honest man is not afraid of anything. How can we discover treachery any other way?"

"Then, Abram, we ought not discover it."

"What else should we do?"

"I don't know."

After Abram and Solomon Moiseyevich had left, and Aleksandr remained alone, he could not fall asleep for a long time.

He felt uneasy in this hotel, where dozens of people were living, hostile and indifferent strangers, where bells were constantly ringing, where unfamiliar voices were calling to each other, where a man was on constant duty at the entrance, and where he himself was not Aleksandr Bolotov, not an officer of the Russian army, but a representative of a London firm, the Englishman McGoog.

"Hypocrites," he thought gloomily. "'Save me—I sink in deep mire.' Abram, Kolka, Svistkov—Svistkov, Kolka, Abram—Svistkov, Kolka, Abram." He did not

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turn on the electric light, but sat in the corner of the couch and peered long into the darkness. His whole revolutionary life passed before his eyes. Arseny Ivanovich, Vera Andreyevna, the committee meetings, Doctor Berg, terror, Tutushkin and lying. But I have done nothing. Happy is Andriusha."

Wheels rumbled by outside on the Theatre Plaza. Raising himself on his elbow and grasping his revolver with his free hand, Aleksandr listened to the growing noise. When it died away and all was still again, he suddenly recalled Kolka the Bum. Aleksandr distinctly saw his thick-lipped face with red moustaches, his ironical greenish eyes and heavy body. He saw him in Sokolniki, under the bush, crimson in the hot rays of the sun, and he heard his rollicking peals of laughter. "I'll quit the cards, I'll quit billiards, the bitter vodka I'll debar." Without knowing why, Aleksandr suddenly felt relieved. Happy in this feeling, yet fearful of it, he leaned his head on the pillow. Suddenly he jumped up. "Of course, Kolka, Kolka! Not Svistkov, not Vanya, but Kolka!" He could not tell where his conviction came from, whether from Abram's suggestion, or Kolka's ridicule, his strange remark about peasants, and his quarrel with Svistkov. Perhaps it simply came from his own indefinable feelings, which had haunted him the last few days. But now he believed without doubt that he had discovered the treachery. It was Kolka who had sold himself out. A foreboding of the truth, one of those prophetic visions which penetrate the substance of things. "The witch," he whispered, and smiled. "Yes, the witch, but now he is not terrifying. My God, give me the happiness to help save Russia, like a spark in the flame." An hour later he was sound asleep.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE following day Aleksandr took the first train to Kuntzevo. After a two-hour search he found what he was looking for, a detached country home for rent. The house was of wood, had two stories and a mezzanine and a garden in poor condition. The watchman, a half-deaf old drunkard, lived half a mile away near the railroad tracks, and the house was entirely vacant. Aleksandr left a deposit, took the keys and gave notice that he would take possession in a day or two. On returning to the city he summoned Kolka to the Hotel Metropol, gave him his new address, and told him to be in Kuntzevo that evening on very important business. Kolka said he would be there at ten o'clock.

At a quarter to ten Aleksandr arrived there. He opened the creaking door, looked at it again on the inside and took a candle out of his pocket. Lighting it, he placed it on the table. He saw a dilapidated ceiling, dirty torn wallpaper and wretched furniture in covers. Again he felt oppressed. "Suppose it's not Kolka? Suppose it's Svistkov? Why am I so sure it's Kolka?" he kept on thinking, while he listened to the splash of the rain outside and the racket of mice under the stove. He took out his revolver and examined it carefully. It was of army make, a Nogan.

The wind blew through the cracks in the walls. The bluish flame of the candle was uneven, now bending down to the table, now standing straight up, now burst-

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ing out in a flickering tongue. Black shadows stretched into the corners. The one area of light was the faint, trembling spot that the candlelight cast on the three-legged table. Aleksandr did not have to wait long. He heard a voice above the sound of the rain. He trembled, and went with heavy steps out on the damp balcony.

"Good evening, Aleksandr Nikolayevich." Kolka made an obeisance, winking and shaking his wet cap. "Why do you lock yourself in? A clever thief can steal even from behind a lock. Ha-ha-ha! I was knocking and knocking, but not a sound. I had to shout. Have you rented this country house?" He stole a glance around the room. "It's my business to ask, and yours to give no answer. If you'll allow my curiosity, what's the purpose?"

"I guess it's needed," Aleksandr replied drily.

"Needed? That means it's none of my business. 'Keep away, fellow.' Well, well, all right, I won't pry, Aleksandr Nikolayevich, I won't pry. What's wrong, anyway? Can't a fellow make a joke, by God?"

Kolka was noisy and free. But it seemed to Aleksandr that his freedom was forced. In his winking, yellowish-green, cattish eyes wicked fires were sparkling and his lips moved slightly, as if he were whispering something. The candle illuminated Aleksandr's moustachios and his firm clean-shaven chin. Kolka unbuttoned his jacket and took a seat. He immediately was swallowed up by the darkness.

"You know, Aleksandr Nikolayevich, I'm afraid there's trouble ahead. When you told us the other day that spies were on our trail, I did not believe you, to tell the truth. Ha-ha-ha! But now I too have my

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doubts. Something is wrong. Everything is not as it should be."

"Have you noticed something?"

"That's just it. One scoundrel was following me. A fat bastard, blood and milk. And his face is beastly—big skull and wolfish eyes. So help me God, I came out at the station. I looked around, he was there. I turned into a side street. He—after me. I shook my fist at him. I'm no infant, by God, I'll kill him. Ha-ha-ha! Then I jumped over a fence and made my way here across the orchards. I really don't know where he came from. And by God, where do so many spies come from? We were living quietly, respectably, without police traps. And suddenly—we're here."

"Then you have brought him over here?" Aleksandr asked, and moved over to the candle. Now he could see Kolka plainly. He sat comfortably, his right foot out forward, beating his cap on his hand. His big face had an unfamiliar, puzzling, insolent smile. Aleksandr felt a shiver run through his body.

"Suppose I did bring him? I spit on him!" Kolka muttered through his teeth and spat out.

"You spit on him?"

"Why not? If Vanya is not faking and there is a provocateur among us, then what do spies amount to? Shrimps! A ridiculous comedy! I'm not afraid of them. Nonsense! But what's up, Aleksandr Nikolayevich? Why did you tell me to come here?"

"What shall I answer?" Aleksandr thought a minute. "Should I invent some foolish pretext? Should I lie to him, to a police informer? No, enough! I don't want to." He raised his head and said, without looking at Kolka:

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"What do you think about the treachery?"

"The treachery?"

"Yes, about the provocateur in the band."

"Oh-h," Kolka drawled impressively, and gave a start.

Aleksandr listened attentively. Outside near the house entrance somebody's steps squashed on the rain-soaked path. But a gust of wind rustled in the foliage of the bushes, big drops of rain drummed on the windows, and all became still again. Kolka crossed himself and winked mysteriously:

"A devil! Ha-ha-ha! Well, then, about the provocateur? But I have already told you."

"What did you say?"

"I said that if there is the least suspicion, I won't work, Aleksandr Nikolayevich. I'll leave, I'll leave for good. I don't want to handle filth."

Aleksandr looked at him.

"You don't want to handle filth?"

"Say, what does this mean, anyway? It's insulting, Aleksandr Nikolayevich—very! If that is why you had me come here, it would have been better if you hadn't. I'm no informer. No. I trust everybody. I guess it's my fate. Well, good-bye, Aleksandr Nikolayevich." He sighed and raised his cap. "Good luck to you. Good-bye."

Kolka got up and turned slowly to the balcony with the same mysterious smile on his face. Aleksandr realized it was a move to get away; and at the same instant it became clear to him that he was not mistaken. Kolka the Bum was not a comrade, not a member of the band, but the treacherous murderer whose identity he had guessed the day before. Under the force of a sudden

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impulse he made a quick action and seized Kolka by the collar. Kolka screamed. His eyes began to burn. He made a sweeping motion with his hand, but instead of striking Aleksandr, he dropped his hand again and asked quietly:

"Why did you grab me?"

"Because," Aleksandr shouted in a commanding voice, his face white with anger, "until now I spoke to you as a comrade, as a member of the band. And now—you hear?—now I am the commander, you're the subordinate. I am the officer, you are the soldier. I order you to answer me. Understand? I *order* you. Where is your revolver? Give it up!"

The candle was slowly burning its last, and immense blue shadows—the shadows of Kolka and Aleksandr—were struggling on the ceiling. Kolka, flushed, his face almost blue, was moving his lips noiselessly, trying to say something. But he said nothing. He reached obediently into his pocket and handed Aleksandr his loaded revolver.

"Let me go, Aleksandr Nikolayevich."

Aleksandr released him, and threw the revolver on the table. Kolka seated himself and forced a smile to his face.

"Why did you get so angry? What's the noise about? Because I want to leave? But by God, you must understand. I—I feel offended. What am I? A spy, a detective, or a slave? I don't want to stay. You hear? It's all over!"

He fixed his jacket and stole a glance at the door. Somewhere outside near the window the sound of steps was heard again. Kolka stretched his neck. Aleksandr smiled. Of small stature, but broad-shouldered, with

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darkened blue eyes, he stood motionless in front of Kolka and looked at him with hatred. They understood each other now. Kolka felt that Aleksandr could kill him, but he did not believe he would, just as nobody believes in his own death by violence. And though he really was in the service of Colonel von Schoen and was receiving money for spying, and had given information about the band that very morning, still he did not feel guilty. All his superiors, advisers, and friends were doing the same —the spies, the captains, the inspectors and the disguised officers. And because he did not feel guilty, he could not believe that Aleksandr hated him. But he was terrified, and Aleksandr could tell he was from his insolent words, his wandering eyes and his drooping head. Aleksandr pressed his lips together, retreated a step, and took out his heavy long-barrelled revolver.

"I advise you to confess."

"You're joking, Aleksandr Nikolayevich," Kolka rattled furiously. "What do you want me to confess? That I was working honestly? That I served the revolution as well as I could? I can't even understand why you speak to me that way. What is it? By God! That revolver of yours! Ah, Aleksandr Nikolayevich, it's a sin. The cat will pay for the mouse's tears." He turned away and waved his hand in despair.

"Confess," Aleksandr muttered, feeling the uneven beating of his heart.

But here something unexpected happened. Kolka jumped up and blew out the candle. At the same instant Aleksandr heard the crash of broken glass. And immediately, moved by a sudden impulse, without seeing either Kolka or the window, Aleksandr raised the revolver and pulled the trigger. The sudden shot rever-

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berated in the air, a yellow flame burst out, and something fell with a groan to the floor. Aleksandr lighted a match. Under the window, with his feet towards the table, lay Kolka face downward. On his neck near the right ear a dark stream of blood was running down his red dishevelled hair. Aleksandr put on his hat and, felt his way in the darkness to the door, his body oddly bent.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE rain had ceased. The remaining clouds were drifting in the sky. To the right the birch trees were rustling, to the left the wet orchards were stretching. It was cold. The air smelled of rain. It seemed to Aleksandr that the path would never end, and the station was hundreds of versts away. When the station lights appeared in the distance, he remembered that Kolka had not been alone. "It's all the same," he muttered with a shrug of his shoulders. "Tsu Shima—it's all the same." He experienced an obstinate, almost shameless feeling of indifference. He was not thinking of the fact that he had killed a man and a corpse was lying in the deserted house. He walked along without thoughts, without sensations, like a ship without a steering-wheel.

On the station platform near the water-tank a man was sleeping. "Kolka's spy," Aleksandr thought. He bent over him. He saw a plump face with dyed moustaches, a torn jacket, and wet army boots. "A fat bastard—big skull—wolfish eyes. And by God, where do so many spies come from?" He recalled Kolka's words and hastened down the platform. The telegraph apparatus ticked unceasingly and behind a lighted window of the first-class buffet a man, evidently a merchant, was yawning.

Suddenly Aleksandr was seized by the sensation of an irreparable act, of the killing of a comrade, Kolka the Bum. But he felt no regret and had no fear. "Well,

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what of it? I killed—Kolka? Yes—Kolka." He heard the rumbling of wheels and saw the sparkle of approaching lights. The rails resounded and the train thundered into the station. Aleksandr boarded it. The man near the water-tank got up and followed him lazily.

Nothing of the outside could be seen through the damp window, to which Aleksandr pressed his cheek. "I killed a man," he was thinking, "but I couldn't have done otherwise. I had to. Wasn't Doctor Berg a snake? That's what Abram said. And Kolka was a snake, too. We are at war, on the battlefield. Martial law prevails—a rapid court-martial." He kept on arguing with himself, but the more he argued, the more distinct did Kolka's laughing image appear before his eyes. "It's insulting, Aleksandr Nikolayevich, very insulting. I'll leave, leave for good. What am I? A spy, a detective, or a slave?" "But he didn't leave and he won't leave. And perhaps he's not guilty. He didn't confess. I shot him simply because he was going to run away. Oh, it's all the same!" He brought his fist down on the bench furiously. "In the battle of Tsu Shima thousands perished, honour perished, Russia perished. What does Kolka the Bum amount to? And how can a provocateur be exposed? I am sure he was a provocateur. Positively he was. And that's enough. I am right. The victory is to him who wants victory and who dares to kill. I have killed and I am responsible—to the Party? To Vanya? To Abram? To the People? No, to my conscience, to Russia." A train going in the opposite direction passed by whistling and the window lighted up with golden sparks. Aleksandr looked around. Behind him, at the door, sat the spy of the station. "Will they arrest me? Let them—Tsu

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Shima—what was I thinking about? Kolka? That's what he deserved. God, give me the happiness, give me the happiness to serve great Russia."

He closed his eyes in weariness. But a foreboding of defeat, a foreboding of inglorious fate did not leave him for a minute. It seemed as if the battle had taken place that day, the cannons had been thundering, the Japanese had won, and the white flag of surrender had been hoisted.

It was late when Aleksandr arrived in Moscow. Not knowing why, he went to the all-night restaurant Varieté and ordered a bottle of wine. He wanted not to think. He wanted to believe that he was not alone, that somewhere in Moscow, or in St. Petersburg, or even a thousand miles away, there was a man who could understand him and realize what it meant to expose a provocateur, to make terror, and most important, to kill. "And Abram? And Svistkov? And Vanya?" He thought of the band with an unfamiliar feeling of affection. "Won't they understand? Won't they appreciate it? We are not mere friends, we are brothers, bound by blood." He did not notice the white tables, or the officers with their tinkling spurs, or the painted women, not even the respectable gentleman with gold rings on his fingers who threw occasional glances at him. The "work" suddenly appeared ridiculous. "We were not able to win there at Tsu Shima. We have not been able to win here in Moscow. I killed Kolka. But was Kolka the only one? Was there not a Doctor Berg? They are legion, these Kolkas and Bergs. Everywhere treachery and disgrace." And the whole Party now made the impression on him of a lion mortally wounded. He saw the estate so painfully built up, the secret meet-

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ings, the committees, the unions, the organizations, the workmen's groups, the fighting squads and the student circles. He saw how in every city, every village, on the snow-bound Russian steppes, the members of the Party were diligently building a new life. And he saw how everywhere, from Archangel to Baku, and from Warsaw to Irkutsk, double-faced Kolkas were hypocritically doing their work and eating like a canker at the Party's body. "Is there any way at all of carrying on the struggle? What's the use of my investigations? Of my killing? The stricken body won't be brought to life again, we shan't find a remedy for the poisonous wounds. But why? Perhaps others will find a remedy. I can't. And if I can't then it means Tsu Shima." He did not finish his wine, but went out into Trubnaya Plaza. The respectable looking gentleman with gold rings on his fingers got up and followed him.

In the Hotel Metropol the doors were wide open. The servants' room was lighted, and on the threshold stood a tall waiter unfamiliar to Aleksandr. Aleksandr looked at his watch. The hands were not moving. It had stopped at twelve o'clock.

"What time have you got?"

"Half past one."

Aleksandr nodded and began to walk up the stairs. But on the third step somebody seized him by the shoulder. Not yet understanding that he was arrested and going white with the indignity of the assault, Aleksandr turned around quickly. He recognized the station spy. The man, holding him tight, was looking at him with frightened eyes. Without a moment's hesitation Aleksandr struck him in the face. He felt the man's hold relax, and ran up the stairs.

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On the landing between the first and second floors he stopped. He saw he was in a trap and could not escape. In the corner, near a plush couch, he saw a dried-up palm. "A palm?" he thought. "What is a palm here for?" For a moment his mind was held by the faint recollection of the southern sky, the sparkling blue bay, the mewing of pink sea-gulls, the red cactus, and the yellow-faced Japanese soldier. "A sentry—Nagasaki—Tsu Shima." He stood erect and looked downstairs indifferently.

Soldiers were running out of the door of the dark dining-room. They were many. In the waiters' room swords were clinking. The officer could not be seen. Aleksandr, blue-eyed, his grey coat unbuttoned, stood motionless on the landing, his black revolver in his hand. He still did not believe that he would be arrested. Would those men in grey uniforms, the very men who had risked their lives in the battle of Tsu Shima—would they want to shoot him? He cocked his revolver and kept his eyes fixed quietly on the soldiers. He knew he would not kill anybody. But as soon as the click of his revolver was heard, a voice shouted, "Shoot!" An awkward corporal with a long neck and big fists raised his gun irresolutely. But Aleksandr, as if he were pushing him aside, aimed at his own breast.

"It's all the same. I have not succeeded—have not helped to save Russia." With a simple quick motion, as when he had shot Kolka, he pulled the trigger. There was a loud report. He fell at the couch under the dusty palm. His firm face with its blue eyes was cold and passionless. Aleksandr looked as though he were asleep.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THAT same night the police arrested Abram, Anna, Svistkov, Solomon Moiseyevich and Rosenstern who was then in Kiev. Solomon Moiseyevich offered armed resistance. He barricaded himself in his room in Ilinka Street and kept up a fire against the besiegers until he ran out of bullets. He was killed towards morning through an opening cut in the ceiling. The only one to escape arrest was Vanya. He was in the theatre when the gendarmes came to his house. He returned home at eleven o'clock and was stopped at the gate by the concierge, who advised him in a low whisper not to enter the house. Vanya went away. He spent a month in disguise in Klina, then secured a new passport, and left for Odessa, where he remained until October, and then started for Bolotovo to see Aleksandr's parents. He had promised Aleksandr at the very outset of the "work" to inform his parents in case of an accident, and he felt it his duty to keep his word.

It was a late, rainy autumn, with a cold north wind prevailing. The linden-trees had lost their dark-green attire, and the garden paths were littered with the fallen leaves. The flowers had withered. Nikolay Stepanovich's favourite flower-bed was denuded of its red carnations, gillyflowers and reseda. The woods were damp and still. The fir-trees were whispering, the fallen twigs cracked under the feet, and flocks of crows filled the air

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with their cawing. There was an atmosphere of sadness about the woods. It foretold a long, cold, gloomy winter.

After the death of his second son Andrey Nikolay Stepanovich had suffered a stroke. For over a year he had been confined to bed. His body, till then sound and vigorous became thin and lifeless, and his bloodless lips tried in vain to speak. Natasha attended him. She was silent and stern. Old Tatyana Mikhailovna could hardly bear her sufferings. God seemed to have abandoned her, though she continued to offer prayers and to have litanies performed. All her affection, all her motherly tenderness were now concentrated upon her firstborn, Aleksandr. She knew he had left the service, but she concealed it from her husband. She guessed that he had followed in the footsteps of her lost sons Mikhail and Andrey, yet cherished the belief that she was mistaken and Aleksandr, an obedient, affectionate son, would spare her age and his dying father. Natasha tried to reassure her, insisting that her brother was abroad and that they would get a letter soon. But she herself had no faith in what she said. And often the two would share tears together, the mother for her sons, the daughter for her mother.

A year passed in mourning and in caring for Nikolay Stepanovich. Everybody in the house, including the servants and occasional uninvited guests, felt the oppressive cloud hanging over the place. The housekeeper, Malanya Petrovna, walked on tiptoes, sighed, and rolled her little mouselike eyes. The maids Lukerya and Dasha sang no more. The manager Aleksey Antonovich crossed himself, sighed, and presented himself regularly to Natasha to receive her awkward orders. The

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household was all in disorder. At night the ax was heard in the woods, and no one asked who was cutting the trees, and for whom. The harvest was half the size of the neighbours'. The garden was neglected. The buildings were unattended. The stalls were empty. Nikolay Stepanovich kept muttering unintelligible words excitedly. "Long-haired ones, knaves, sold Russia, hang." Then Natasha would come over to him noiselessly and caress his grey hair. The family held together by the three sons, ruddy Misha, tall Andriusha and broad-shouldered Sasha was no more. There remained nothing but a demolished, weatherbeaten nest.

Vanya reached the manor-house in the morning. In his torn peasant jacket and felt shoes he looked like a labourer out of work.

Aleksey Antonovich received him in his office. When Vanya explained that he came on personal business, he shook his head in distrust, but called a boy and told him to announce the visitor. A samovar was filling the office with smoke. The walls were covered with portraits of metropolitans and of General Skobelev on a white horse. Vanya looking through the window saw the barefoot boy running to the house, jumping over puddles, the lilac bushes shaking in the wind, and Malanya Petrovna working in the kitchen. Observing this unfamiliar life, he felt he had come in vain. But he heard the sound of rapid steps outside. Natasha entered the office. She wore a black dress and a black knitted shawl. Vanya immediately recognized her by her cold blue eyes. She looked at him perplexed.

"Have you come on business?"

"Yes, on personal business."

They went outside. The wet, soggy ground was

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covered with rotting straw. Freezing sparrows were flying around. Vanya stammered:

"I come from your brother."

"From Aleksandr?" Natasha asked in excitement. "Are you from him? Is he alive?"

Vanya cast down his eyes.

"Well, speak, speak!"

"Aleksandr Nikolayevich is dead," Vanya answered, afraid to look at Natasha. She said nothing. Vanya flushed and was silent.

"When?"

"In Moscow, on the 20th of August."

"I read about it. Then it was he?"

"Yes."

She turned away, and went back to the house oblivious of Vanya. In her black dress and with her long braided light hair, she looked like a nun. Vanya thought she would fall. But suddenly she stopped:

"Are you his comrade? Yes? Excuse me—do you —do you need anything?"

"No, nothing."

"I beg you—"

"Thank you, nothing."

She stood a long time, unable to move, as if trying to grasp something. At last she threw up her hands in resignation.

"My God, how will I tell them?"

The station was seven versts away. Vanya went on foot. It was windy, his feet sank in the mud, a cold mist was falling, and a heavy cloud was encircling the sky on the left from behind the woods. On all sides, as far as the eye could reach, the harvested fields stretched monotonously. Along the road stood the birches, like

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